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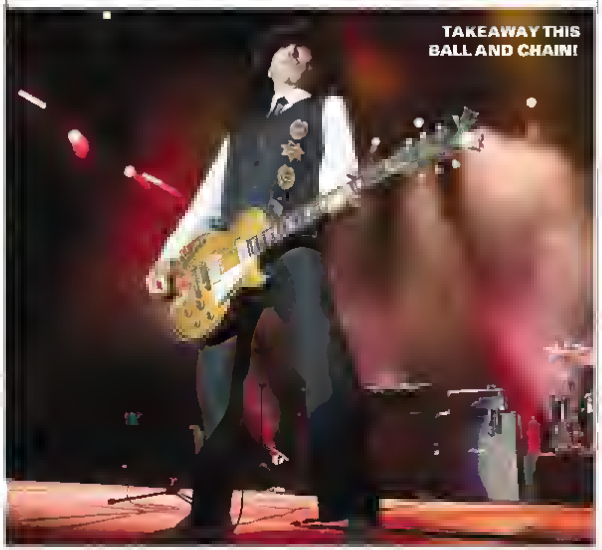

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Illustration by Dustin Myers
Design by Federico Medina

ORANGE FEATHERS »

FELIPE FLORES

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OC Weekly is located at 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley CA 92708, (714) 550-0100 Display Advertising (714) 550-0910; Classified Advertising (714) 550-0900; National Advertising, (909) 278-9566 voicemail@aguc.com; Fax, (714) 550-0971; Advertising Fax, (714) 550-0971 Classified Fax, (714) 550-0975; Circulation (888) 732-7302; Website: www.ocweekly.com. The publication is free, one per reader. Removal of more than one paper from any distribution point constitutes theft, and violators are subject to prosecution. Please address all correspondence to OC Weekly 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley CA 92708, email, letters@ocweekly.com. Published weekly (Thursday) OC Weekly is wholly owned and operated by OC Weekly News, Inc., a California corporation. Subscription price: $25 for six months; $50 per year. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to OC Weekly at P.O. Box 28956, Santa Ana, CA 92799. Submissions of all kinds are welcome. Address them to the editor and include a self-addressed stamped envelope.
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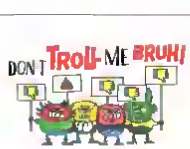

"Oh, jeez, *OC Weekly*. They got to you, too?"
—*Kenny Gee, commenting on Anthony Pignataro's "Chapman Professor McLaren Reflects on Fascism in Orange County" (Oct. 14)*

We respond: Take a deep snort from this hankie we're holding, Kenny. That's it. Good boy. One of us, one of us!

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The nose is a lovely mixture of red fruits, cherries and berries, and dusty underbrush, incense and minerality **Complex! Inviting!** The palate takes the red fruits and runs with it as tastes of raspberries, cherries, cranberries and pomegranate fill the glass and profile Notes of cedar, forest floor and garrique add depth, and bright, forward acidity keeps the wine **lively and uplifting**-- and will help cut through some of the rich foods we envision enjoying with this one! The finish lingers with notes of cherry lambic, underbrush and ground clove Beautiful wine!

Red Quartz is a small production Pinot Noir from the coastal mountain vineyards in Chile's Casablanca Valley, 14 miles from the Pacific Ocean with direct exposure to the cool marine climate Winemaker Vicente Johnson spent many years in California (making wine and earning his MBA at Sonoma State) and their locale in Chile reminds him of the landscapes of Coastal Sonoma **The soils here are mainly granitic with high presence of Quartz under a layer of sand and red clay, tainting the quartz in a red/orange color** Red Quartz Pinot Noir is a unique wine coming from this special location and perfect for the month of November (**and beyond**)!

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» GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

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This is *Halloweentown*

In Disney's fantasy world, witches are little more than a villainous lot preying upon virtuous princesses. It's a familiar trope from *Snow White* onward. Of course, in the 1937 classic the envious Evil Queen turns into a black-robed, beak-faced hag offering Snow White a poison apple conjured from a book of spells. Decades later, *The Little Mermaid* presented a Rubenesque take on the usually evil, gangly figure in Ursula the sea witch.

Disney later gave us the Sanderson Sisters, a children-eating trio in *Hocus Pocus* that may seem like harmless Halloween fun, especially every October. But it's only with *Halloweentown* that witches finally catch a break.

The Disney Channel movie that premiered in 1998 isn't perfect, but it does offer some welcomed departures. Marnie Piper, a rebellious young teen, spends another Halloween at home, thanks to her overbearing mother who detests the time of year. The mood lightens when Agatha Cromwell, played by the late Debbie Reynolds, visits her grandchildren unannounced.

She brings a bag of goodies from which Marnie pulls a pentagram necklace. Instead of recoiling in horror at the often-maligned five pointed star, Marnie greets the discovery with excitement. When dressing up in a Halloween costume also found in the bag, the impressionable girl proclaims, "I'm a Wiccan!"

Sure, those scenes may seem hokey, but they serve as innocent antidotes for the bigotry and ignorance that continues to hamper Wicca and its practitioners.

Next, Grandma Cromwell tells stories of a place called "Halloweentown" populated by witches and the like. Marnie's kid sister thinks witches are mean and scary. "They're just like everyone else," Grandma advises. "Some are kind, some are mean. That's the way they use their magic."

Well, if that ain't the moral of the story!

Soon, Marnie learns of Grandma's true intentions in wanting her to be trained before losing her witch powers passed down by the Cromwell lineage. Marnie sneaks on a bus to Halloweentown, where the family of witches must ultimately battle an evil warlock rather than do his bidding.

Wrapped in family fun, such subtle subversions are the real magic of *Halloweentown*.

GSANROMAN@OCWEEKLY.COM

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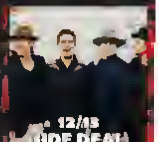
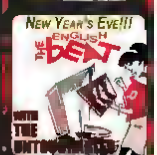
11/29 & 11/30 & 12/1





UPCOMING SHOWS

1/24 SKELETON CREW (GRATEFUL DEAD TRIBUTE)
1/26 JOHN MAYALL
1/31 QUEEN HATIOH
2/6 THE FOUR FRESHMEH
2/7 WYNONHA A THE BIG NOISE
2/8 SINEAD O'CONNOR
2/9 NIKKA COBTA
2/13 PHIL VASSAR "Stripped Down"
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2/16 ALBERT CUMMINOS
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2/26 BURTON CUMMIHGS
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3/8 TIHSLEY ELLIS
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HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Daddy Issue

You, your wife and your 10-year-old son barged in front of me as I was waiting at the Disneyland train station in Tomorrowland. Your wife, who wore a knee brace and hang-dog look of defeat, asked what you wanted to do next: Another ride? Lunch? Back to the hotel for a swim? You replied, "I don't give a shit." Your wife said okay. You said tomorrow you were going to Studio City. Your wife said she didn't want to hang around in the Valley for six hours. You shot back, "Fine. I don't care. I'm tired of your shit. I'm going to Studio City, and you can go the fuck home." Your wife and son were quiet. They are used to you being a dick in public. I looked at your son's sad face. Hey, kid, enjoy your vacation! Study hard. Get a part-time job. Be involved in a bunch of school activities. And when you turn 18, get away from your idiot dad.

ROB AUL

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com

'CAUSE THIS IS THRILLER

OC'S SCARIEST PEOPLE 2019

By Matt Coker, R. Scott Moxley, Anthony Pignataro and Gabriel San Román

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DUSTIN MYERS

Michael Jackson's *Thriller* album dropped almost 37 years ago, on Nov. 30, 1982. The iconic video for the song "Thriller" premiered on MTV more than a year later, on Dec. 2, 1983. That means 2019 is the 37th anniversary of the album and the 36th of the video. So why do a "Thriller"-themed OC's 31 Scariest People issue now as opposed to during a 35th or 40th anniversary? Because MJ and horror were fresh in our minds from the office movie-night screening of *Finding Neverland*. Warning: There are more than 31 scary people on our list because some entries include multiple people. Just go with it like a Neverland Ranch parent, then head to ocweekly.com for the latest Bob Dornan Scary OC Hall of Fame inductee. 'Cause this is thriller, 31 Scariest People thriller night.

1) PASTOR JOHN MCFARLAND

A towering figure in the United Methodist Church for decades, Fullerton pastor John McFarland's stature came crashing down. A conservative preacher who favored a split in the United Methodist Church over same-sex marriage, McFarland turned to the Bible to holster his belief in homosexuality as sin. Police first cuffed the gospel gabber in December after a young girl came forward with allegations of child molestation in Escondido. Authorities believed more victims existed elsewhere, as church officials swiftly removed McFarland from his post at Orangethorpe United Methodist Church. In May, police arrested McFarland again, the pastor faced dowo 11 felony chester charges carrying a maximum of 179 years to life in prison. He's entering not guilty pleas to allegations he victimized several children over the span of many years. **Mitigating factor:** Judge not, lest ye he judged before an Orange County Superior Court judge.

2) WILLIAM "RICK" SINGER

The poster boy of the Operation Varsity Blues scandal admitted in federal court in March that he built phony athletic profiles and hired decoys to take admissions tests for the academically challenged spawn of dozens of wealthy parents who utilized the service he operated out of his Newport Beach home. As a cooperating government witness, Singer secretly recorded calls with clients all over the country, including: Mossimo Giannulli, founder of the Mossimo clothing brand started on Balboa Island and husband of co-defendant Lori Loughlin (a.k.a. *Full House*'s "Aunt Becky"), Douglas Hodge, the former CEO of Newport Beach investment-management company PIMCO; I-Hin "Joey" Chen, a Newport Beach shipping-industry executive, Robert Flaxman, the Laguna Beach founder and CEO of a real-estate-development firm, and Newport Coast's Michelle Janavs, a former executive of her family's food business that popularized Hot Pockets and the daughter of Paul Merage, the namesake of the UC Irvine School of Business and Jewish Community Center of Orange County. Singer, Hodge, Flaxman and Janavs pleaded guilty in their cases. Giannulli, Loughlin and Chen have pleaded not guilty, and—presumably because they have not settled—the gubment slapped them with additional counts on Oct. 22. **Mitigating factor:** Aunt Becky in *Full Big House*? Have mercy!

3) CERTAIN OC JAIL DEPUTIES

The worst of the sheriff's deputies assigned to jail duty have terrorized pretrial inmates for years, including executing unnecessary beatings and torturous activities such as stripping people, chaining them in cold rooms for more than 12 hours and denying water, bathroom breaks or needed medical attention. But one abusive situation hasn't garnered much public attention. Inmates of the Theo Lacy Jail in 2016 claim they were forced to enter and clean up a cell following a gruesome razor-blade suicide. Records show they found a horrific, bloody mess, with spatter all over the floor and walls. Making matters worse, two of the involved inmates, who've filed a federal civil-rights lawsuit against the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD), claim they were not given adequate protective gear and were denied preventative medical means to fight potential hepatitis B exposure. They've also alleged they suffered from depression, anxiety and insomnia from the ordeal. Taxpayer-funded lawyers for the deputies have been arguing they should enjoy immunity for their conduct because they are cops and also that there's no solid evidence they acted purposely indifferent to the forced cleanup crew. In

June, a federal judge refused the deputies' demand to kill the case before it can reach a jury sometime in 2020. **Mitigating factor:** The massive wall listing OCSD offenses against humanity is nearly full.

4) CHUYEN VAN VO

Though Chuyen Van Vo pleaded not guilty to the charge that he murdered Steven Shek Keung Chan in a Cal State Fullerton parking lot, the 51-year-old Huntington Beach resident is a terrifying suspect in the case because the men apparently knew each other. They had both worked in the university administration office for years. The 57-year-old Chan retired in 2017, but he had returned earlier this year as a consultant. Fullerton police, who have never commented on their relationship, said they found zip ties, wigs, an "incendiary device" and another knife not used in the August murder when they arrested Vo a few days after. **Mitigating factor:** He's innocent until proven guilty.

5) JUDGE TIMOTHY J. STAFFORD

It's always fun to find out that the old white guy sitting on the bench in a courtroom holds desiccated, misogynistic viewpoints about women. That's what happened in December 2018, when the Commission on Judicial Performance smacked Orange County Judge Timothy J. Stafford for comments he made during an April 5, 2017, hearing regarding a woman's request for a restraining order against a co-worker. First, Stafford characterized the woman's co-worker as "pretty much the big man on campus, had the hucks in his back pocket, and the petitioner was the best looking girl in school, and he was going to get her any way he possibly could, all right? And she knew it, and she liked it because she got things." Then Stafford brought up a text from the woman to her husband asking him to buy her a new car in exchange for performing oral sex with him daily. "If I got a letter from someone or a phone call saying, 'I'll give you a [sex act] every day for the rest of your life for a car,'" Stafford said, "we will be at the Mercedes dealer pretty soon, but not because I'm married, all right?" **Mitigating factor:** He's now retired.

6) JOHN SARO BALIAN

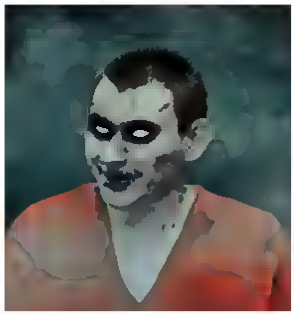
Seal Beach resident and Glendale Police Department cop John Saro Balian repeatedly traveled to Brownsville, Texas, and crossed the Mexico border with a woman known in an FBI task force report as "SS." In addition, Balian and "SS" called each other 1,534 times from December 2015 to January 2018. Hot romance? FBI agents didn't think so. Law-enforcement intelligence determined that "SS" was the longtime girlfriend of a high-ranking member of the murderous Gulf Cartel, a multibillion-dollar organized-crime syndicate based in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico. A 2017 U.S. government report describes how that Mexican Mafia cartel committed ruthless violence to smuggle cocaine, humans, marijuana, heroin and methamphetamine into this country. It also specializes in bribing American politicians, prosecutors and cops. FBI agents claim that Balian had secret ties to both the Mexican and Armenian organized-crime families, helping mobsters extort pot shops, stealing cars and finding government witnesses. Around the time of his arrest, Balian denied corruption. "I'm not fucking on anybody's payroll," he said. In fact, he claimed the mob treated him like a "pig." Despite those denials, a federal judge in March sentenced him to a prison term of 21 months. **Mitigating factor:** Balian has a chance of becoming a character in an upcoming blockbuster Don Winslow crime novel.

7) ANDREA LAFFERTY

Over the years, the Reverend Lou Sheldon of Anaheim and daughter Andrea Lafferty have used their Traditional Values Coalition (TVC) to fret about possible sodomy on the battlefield if gay soldiers were permitted to serve in combat. They've also had time to insist that gays should be called only "perverts" and "sodomites" while operating a ham-fisted, right-wing, direct-mail scheme that brought them untold millions of dollars in revenue from a national audience relishing bigotry and hatred. But while they were working those lucrative angles, the father-daughter team forgot to live according to conservative, traditional family values themselves. In a highly charged pending civil lawsuit in Orange County, the reverend is suing his offspring, alleging she stole control of TVC from him, misappropriated the organization's funds; converted his $1.9 million Washington, D.C., home into her own, committed blatant self-dealing in contracts; and robbed him of supposedly required retirement income. Sheldon called the moves not only "elder abuse," but also "unethical and dishonest." Lafferty has been trying to settle the case before a trial in hopes of thwarting more embarrassment. **Mitigating factor:** We've started the stopwatch on how long it takes these two rubes to blame gay people for their ugly personal squabble.

8) BILL BROUGH

Multiple Republican women have come forward this year to accuse third-term Assemblyman Bill Brough (R-Dana Point) of sexual harassment. Some allegations go back years, while others are more recent. But there are so many charges against Brough that both the OC Republican Party Central Committee and the Lincoln Club—that big-money hastion of far right-wing conservancy in Orange County—have asked Brough to end his re-election campaign. For his part, Brough has resolutely proclaimed his innocence. In fact, he insists that all the accusations against him are just an elaborate conspiracy to silence him for his opposition to Orange County's Transportation Corridor Agencies. **Mitigating factor:** He has three challengers in the Republican primary.



9) BRANDON FLEURY

In the wake of the 2018 massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, a young Orange County man, Brandon Fleury, decided to troll the families and friends of the 34 dead and wounded. Fleury created 13 Instagram accounts with offensive names such as "bullseyetauntsyou" and "thedouglasshooter" to send at least 301 cyberstalking messages from December 2018 to January 2019. One disgusting communication to the father of a 14-year-old victim who was active in the school band cracks the window into the 22-year-old Santa Ana resident's mind: "Little Alex Schachter will never play music again." That message included laughing emojis. "Your grief is my joy," he wrote to a different family. One that referenced Scott Beigel, a Parkland teacher who gave his life shielding students from bullets, read, "hehehaha! Mr. Beigel is dead." Fleury tried to explain away the misdeeds by deriding the survivors as "activists," code in certain alt-right quarters for worthless bums. During the October federal trial, which found him guilty, his attorney explained that his client suffers from a neural disorder. Lack of empathy. Ya think? How unhinged is this nut? Showing no remorse when arrested, he said he was motivated by a desire to gain popularity. **Mitigating factor:** Fleury faces a maximum punishment of 20 years in prison when he is sentenced in December.

10) THIS GUY!

Lying sack of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was born in Orange and graduated from Los Amigos High School in Fountain Valley, where he played on the basketball team before leaving Orange County for West Point, West Germany (while serving in the Army), Harvard Law, Kansas (where he and three West Point buddies acquired aircraft-parts companies) and finally Washington, D.C. (while serving in Congress, as CIA director and now as Secretary of State). **Mitigating factor:** He failed to get the "Los Amigos" emblem on his basketball jersey deported.

11) ACT! FOR AMERICA LAGUNA WOODS

Because white supremacy pervades so much of American political discourse, it should surprise no one that a hate group such as Act! For America, which preaches against Muslims, has a chapter in Laguna Woods. Or that in July the group packed the 814-seat Laguna Woods Performing Arts Center to see Brigitte Gabriel, Act! For America's founder and chairwoman, as well as a virulently anti-Muslim author who told the crowd things such as "In the West, we celebrate life. In the Islamic world, they celebrate death." Later, after Gabriel said that she wished that those who "complain about America" would get a "one-way ticket to get the hell out of here and back to whatever country you came from!" the audience erupted in applause, prompting Gabriel to shriek "Woooo! I'm talking to the right people." **Mitigating factor:** Most members already have one foot in the grave.

12) JOSE ANTHONY PAEZ

On Aug. 26, the Orange County district attorney's office (OCDA) sent out a press release that would have scared the hell out of every parent at Fullerton Union High School. "A former Fullerton Police Department school resource officer has been charged with secretly photographing and videotaping up the skirt of a 16-year-old high school student," it stated. "The Fullerton Police Department initiated an internal investigation into accusations that Officer Jose Anthony Paez was acting inappropriately while on duty. The investigation spanned the last five years of the officer's on-duty interaction with the pub-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

'CAUSE THIS IS THRILLER

OC'S SCARIEST PEOPLE 2019

» FROM PAGE 9

lic." As if that wasn't bad enough, the pro-cop Behind the Badge blog reported that Paez wore "Declaration of Independence pants and a shirt covered in U S flags" to a golf tournament in 2016. **Mitigating factor:** Fullerton PD transferred Paez out of Fullerton Union High in May.

13) AMY PHAN WEST

Congressional candidate Amy Phan West is what you would get if the comments section on one of our stories on fascism in Orange County somehow became a sentient being. Everything's just off—like the time she sent reporters photos of her saluting in front of the Pentagon, even though she never served in the military and civilians don't salute. Like President Donald Trump, West traffics in weaponized stupidity. She calls her opponent, incumbent Congressional Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach), a "Socialist Democrat." She says the Democratic Party "wants to destroy the U.S. economy." She says schools are "sexualizing our children" and is "committed to ending California's shocking SeXXX Ed curriculum." And who could forget when she went to the Hamptons this summer for a mega-fundraiser for Trump and denounced "liberal global elites." It's all overwrought, hyperbolic nonsense that recalls the ughness of bitter, defeated GOP Representative "B-1 Bob" Dornan. **Mitigating factor:** West is running in a district where Democrats hold a 13 percentage point advantage.

14) RACIST SAN CLEMENTE STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Our Sept. 16 report "San Clemente and Lincoln High Schools Probe Racist Taunts at Football Game" produced multiple comments like BJ's: "I was at the game and decided to sit on the visitor side because the San Clemente student section was so packed. Me and my three friends never heard anything even remotely racist. Also, there were no people telling anyone that they needed to be on a leash or anyone being told to go back to their country. I'm just saying that it's a little odd that we conveniently didn't hear any of the overwhelming racist comments that there apparently were." However, both schools later confirmed that multiple, predominantly African American students visiting from San Diego were subjected to racist taunts and other verbal abuse from the San Clemente stands and that Lincoln High cheerleaders using a restroom were called "dogs" who belonged on "leashes." **Mitigating factor:** San Clemente's Tritons spanked Lincoln High's Hornets, 29-0. A win is a win, right, whiteys?

15) DISNEYLAND'S FIGHTING FAMILY

Another Main Street Electrical Parade, another splash off Splash Mountain, another rote spiel from a Jungle Cruise captain—ho hum. That's the likely response any video of traditional Mouse House attractions would receive these days. But let a family's violent, hair-pulling, girlfriend-clobbering street fight roll on YouTube, and you've got a guaranteed viral sensation. As fucked-up as the video posted in July was—young children of the battling men, women and grandparent watched in horror alongside other mouths-agape guests—you couldn't take your eyes off the Toon Town tussle. Pure poetic justice unfolded when a thick-armed man defending his girlfriend turned around and smacked her when informed she knocked his mother to the ground. Not that we condone dudes hitting females or any non-sanctioned bout. What's amazing is the family first denied having even been involved in a fight—until the proof showed up on YouTube and three pugilists were charged with multiple charges. **Mitigating factor:** Finally, a reason to buy an annual pass.

16) *SIEG HEIL* STUDENTS

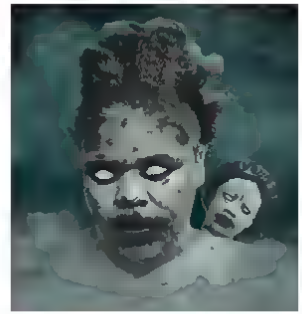
When students from Newport Harbor and Costa Mesa high schools decided to play a drinking game at a party one night, a sudden "rage cage" inspiration struck. Arranging red beer cups in the shape of a swastika, teens proudly posed around it while extending Nazi salutes. The stunt made rounds on social media, causing immediate outrage. A few months later, another controversy erupted in Garden Grove when video surfaced of Pacifica High School students giving a Nazi salute and singing a German tune by Herms Niel used to rouse Hitler's troops into battle. The incident happened in December, but the Garden Grove Unified School District only learned of it in March when they snuffed any scandal out by quietly handling the situation away from the public. It all goes to show that the kids are all Reich. **Mitigating factor:** In doing their best Hitler Youth impressions, these students shattered liberal illusions that OC racism is simply going to age out when the last of its coffin-dodging haters die.

17) JACOB WOHL

Originally from Orange County, Jacob Wohl is the Wile E. Coyote of alt-right internet trolling. He's relentless, shameless and cartoonishly stupid. Banned from Wall Street three years ago at the tender age of 20 for allegedly unlawfully selling securities (he was finally indicted earlier this year, just shy of the statute of limitations), Wohl has lately remade himself (though fraud is still very much his MO). His greatest achievement this year was his astonishing accusation that Democratic candidate Elizabeth Warren was big into BDSM and nearly boned a 24-year-old former Marine to death. Of course, Wohl had no evidence, and the assembled reporters laughed at him. What do you expect from a guy who told a *USA Today* reporter in February that he planned to create fake left-wing Twitter accounts to help Trump win election? **Mitigating factor:** Wohl recently held another press conference saying he knew the identity of the whistleblower whose accusations started the recent impeachment inquiry against Trump, though he ultimately declined to release the name and ended up just further humiliating himself.

18) BRADLEY MUHLENKAMP

Long Beach cop Bradley Muhlenkamp was one of two officers who arrived to investigate a January 2017 report of an obviously off-kilter woman holding a 4-inch knife, making verbal threats and pushing a shopping cart near a Veterans Administration hospital parking lot. Simuon Pream didn't follow commands to stop and continued to walk away with no other persons nearby, prompting Muhlenkamp and officer Eliecer Domingo to close in on the 37-year-old. Claiming he feared the 5-foot-2, 100-pound Pream was going to kill him, a much larger and heavily armed Muhlenkamp fired seven bullets from a distance of about 15 feet after he asserted she lunged at him. But there was a pesky problem. According to the autopsy report, Pream had been shot in the back, making the purported lunge scenario an Olympian backflip feat of historic proportions. She'd also been shot twice in the buttocks. The medical examiner did find a single shot to the abdomen that had a left-to-right and downward trajectory—not front to back. As lawyers for the cop worked to hide photos of the wounds from prosecutors, the police union hailed the killing as righteous. In March, a jury found that Domingo, who fired one shot, and Muhlenkamp had used unreasonable force and that Muhlenkamp's conduct "shocked the conscience." Jurors awarded the Pream family (parents and children) $9 million from city coffers, but when government officials threatened a protracted appeal, the parties settled on $7.5 million. **Mitigating factor:** Given how SoCal law-enforcement organizations work, Muhlenkamp will win salary increases, promotions and eventually become police chief.



19) ALLEGED MAGGIANO'S SMASHERS

Former Maggiano's Little Italy employee Passion Shenay Coleman allegedly returned to her ex-workplace on the South Coast Plaza grounds on Oct. 5, threw a plate at a worker and fled. The 27-year-old is accused of returning that same afternoon with her friend and fellow Fullerton resident Laglennda Damona Carr. She yelled and acted disruptive as Coleman took a bat to the restaurant's tables and a television, according to the Costa Mesa Police Department. Mugshots were released of the pair in hopes witnesses would come forward. They would have been hard to miss, as those images showed their faces had been painted, with Carr also having somehow managed to get what appears to be a flour facial. Both went on to plead not guilty to vandalizing the restaurant. **Mitigating factor:** No one was harmed in the making of this spectacle.

20) KEVIN PEDERSEN

Earlier this year, the OCDA rubber-stamped the deadly 2018 shooting of Eliuth Peñaloza Nava by Anaheim police officers Kevin Pedersen and Sean Staymates. Though the OCDA declined to press charges, it did wave a disapproving finger at the trigger-happy cops for firing 76 rounds during the Saturday-morning car chase through residential neighborhoods. Pedersen alone shot 64 times, including through his windshield, as body-camera footage revealed. When Nava's truck finally came to a stop, the cops unloaded one last volley of bullets into his lifeless body. "Let's cuff this fucker!" Pedersen said afterward. The weapon brandished by Nava during the chase turned out to be a BB gun. Anaheim PD canned Pedersen, who was on probation at the time, a few months after the deadly shooting. **Mitigating factor:** Pedersen is now taking a shot at being a private investigator.

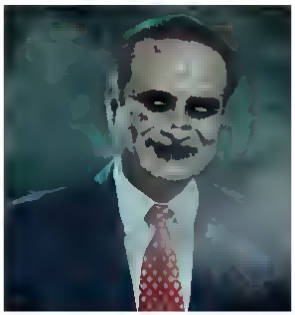
21) HUNTINGTON BEACH AX-WIELDING MAN

We're calling him that because we have no idea who he is. We know he exists because in September, he took an ax to a variety of porch lights, car windows and tires throughout Huntington Beach. The police apparently arrested the guy that night, but what happened next is a bit of a mystery. We called the OCDA to find out if he'd ever been charged or even had a name, but

they never got back to us. What's scarier than that? **Mitigating factor:** He apparently doesn't have access to longswords.

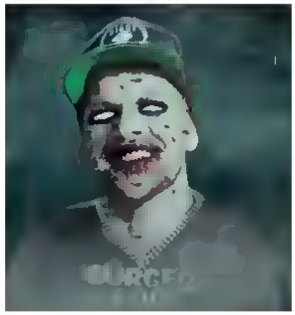
22) GERRY SERRAND

Drunk with hubris while sporting a Wooly Willy magnetic mustache, Santa Ana Police Officers Association President Gerry Serrano is the Golden City's grandest villain. Past election cycles have established his police union as the dominant force in local politics, with its money pouring into the coffers of quislings. But with muscle moves come new enemies—one of whom presumably delivered reporters scathing documents regarding Serrano's DUI arrest in 2011. A Westminster police report detailed his outbursts against an arresting officer, ones that'd even make an anti-cop anarchist blush! The OCDA declined to prosecute the case, citing insufficient evidence, as Serrano had refused both blood and field-sobriety tests. These days, Serrano's sycophants are obsessed with trying to recall Republican council members Ceci Iglesias and Juan Villegas, both of whom didn't vote to give his police-union members a budget-busting, sales-tax-dipping $25.6 million in raises. **Mitigating factor:** Serrano strong-arming City Hall has exposed SanTana Democrats for being the cop-union-cowering *chavalas* they are!



23) HARRY SIDHU

Harry Sidhu celebrated his slim victory as Anaheim's next mayor last November at the Disneyland Hotel by declaring, "We are open for business!" In less than a year, Sidhu hasn't disappointed. He teamed up with Anaheim First, a Chamber of Commerce astroturf group, to convince residents that all business is good business. Sidhu's also a negotiator for stadium deals with the Angels—inspiring about as much confidence as the Halos do every feckless September. Being Anaheim mayor also became Sidhu's best debt-retirement plan, thanks to a corporate buyout of his outstanding loans this year from a failed 2016 state Assembly bid. But Sidhu hasn't entirely lived up to his election-night promise, he sacked an Arco station in Anaheim Hills set to rival a Shell station that just happened to be owned by his political ally. **Mitigating factor:** Sidhu's the first non-white, immigrant mayor in Anaheim's history—that, and his tenure is already a master class in political corruption.



24) BEAR "BURGER GOD" DEGIDIO

"Burger God" is the BKOdacious owner of Ground House Burgers, an Irvine-bred, ground-beef-patty emporium that pooped out a location in Downtown Santa Ana in January. At that time, Bear Degidio had also been hired by Brian Calle as "director of digital" at *LA Weekly*, and the hamburglar somehow managed to get one of his meat bombs onto the cover of Calle's other rag, the rack-stealing *Irvine Weekly*. Degidio's shtick involves pumping out highly caffeinated social-media videos promoting himself and his meaty creations. Based on a first-hand account in this alt-weekly, we also know that he stages stunts in his joint that include the manhandling of unsuspecting customers. DOOD! NOT COOL! **Mitigating factor:** Degidio is not currently listed in the *LA Weekly* staff box—though, to be honest, we're not sure our former sister publication even exists anymore.

25) CLAUDE PARRISH

If you thought Claude Parrish was above playing vicious hardball politics just because he's the Orange County assessor, think again. Earlier this year, Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Laguna Beach) announced that her AB 608, which would lower taxes on some California small businesses, had been introduced after discussing the issue with Parrish, a Republican supporter of the legislation. Shortly after a July 15 press release was sent out by Petrie-Norris' office to celebrate Governor Gavin Newsom signing the bill, Parrish repaid her generosity by endorsing Republican Kelly Ernby, who is challenging the Assembly member in the 2020 election. "Deputy District Attorney Kelly Ernby is the best choice in the race for the 74th Assembly District to take on the overtaxing and over-regulating Democrats in Sacramento," Parrish said, as though AB 608 didn't even exist. **Mitigating factor:** Democrats fall for this every time.

26) SERGEANT SLAPPY

In April, a lone Santa Ana police officer, whom we'll call "Sergeant Slappy," cleared homeless people from train tracks near Delhi Park before parking his patrol car alongside them. Hovering above, someone began recording what happened next. The officer's baton dong is whipped out before a hand starts furiously beating it with the reckless abandon of a police-brutality tape. Did Sergeant Slappy self-serve, or was there someone else in the patrol car? Santa Ana PD launched a masturbation investigation after the *Weekly* published viral video of the sex act. **Mitigating factor:** It remains to be seen if Sergeant Slappy's antics, whatever they may be, evade the schlong arm of the law.

27) MICHAEL MATSUDA

Despite not having any experience as a school site administrator, Michael Matsuda became superintendent of Anaheim Union High School District thanks to a coup in 2014. Since then, the district has become a training ground for future Democratic elected officials while offering decent programs for kiddos. It might've all been a welcomed departure from the days of whackjob xenophobes such as Harald Martin, but a "yes man" culture deposes and demotes anyone who dares defy Matsuda. Creeping nepotism corrodes its progressive veneer, too. Worst of all, the district will pay $7.9 million to settle a case involving several John F. Kennedy High School officials who failed to report sexual-abuse allegations against a water polo coach to proper authorities. Somehow, several key players remain district employees. **Mitigating factor:** Fortunately for Matsuda, few Dems seem to give a shit.

28) CALTRANS

Jeffrey Baker was a Caltrans maintenance supervisor in Orange County and worked for years as the only African American in 25 of those positions. For about a decade before being fired, Baker lodged racial-discrimination complaints against bosses without winning relief. He claims he was not only singled out for a level of supervision not applied to his peers, but also that he was repeatedly called the n-word at work. In 2014, he arrived at his Stanton Caltrans yard and found a sturdy, rope noose hanging near a trash bin. When he protested the terroristic threat, an employee responded by saying, "Watch your back," according to court records in pending litigation over the firing. Caltrans attorneys told the judge that Baker invented racial-discrimination cries as a way to thwart firing for misuse of state property, dishonesty, inexcusable negligence and engaging in other serious misconduct. For example, the agency has accused him of allowing a filthy, illegal homeless camp at an Anaheim freeway underpass and seeking sexual favors from the spot's female occupants. A forensic examination of Baker's state-issued cellphone found a photograph of two homeless people engaging in intercourse as well as text messages to a Santa Ana businessman who'd stored equipment at the underpass. Baker had denied knowing the man or accepting gratuities, investigators reported. **Mitigating factor:** Perhaps we now know why it takes Caltrans so long to fix roads.

29) SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON

Noah Domingo, who graduated in the spring of 2018 from Crescenta Valley High School in La Crescenta, where he played football and basketball, followed his 20-year-old sister Brianna to UC Irvine, where he majored in biology and dreamed of becoming involved in sports medicine for a basketball team. But his dream ended in the early morning hours of Jan. 12, when he died of alcohol intoxication after attending a Sigma Alpha Epsilon event for winter rush week. The university suspended the frat, and both issued "thoughts and prayers" statements to the Domingo family. Noah's father, Dale, blamed "fraternity hazing." **Mitigating factor:** The frat's national organization closed the Irvine chapter.

30) MARK DWEN LAUN

After meeting a Chinese woman (we'll call her "Jane Doe") online in February 2015, Irvine's Mark Owen Laun spent two weeks with her that June in China and decided to marry her in December. Doe told Laun after she'd moved to Orange County that she didn't enjoy sexual intercourse, a stance that he advised was against the wishes of Jesus Christ. When that argument failed, he claimed U.S. immigration officials would deport her if she didn't fulfill what he saw as her marital duties. That threat didn't work either, so he forced himself on her, according to Doe's grand-jury testimony. In June 2016, Irvine cops had responded to a 911 call from Doe, who was found bleeding and frightened outside the home. She claimed Laun had broken the top of a beer bottle and stabbed her after she had resisted his advances. Declaring himself duped in a marriage-fraud plot, Laun claimed Doe stabbed herself to win immigration benefits as a domestic-violence crime victim. A jury found him guilty of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and a judge sentenced him to 180 days in jail. Laun appealed, claiming it was absurd to consider a bottle as a deadly weapon when it was used to consume beer. In October, the California Court of Appeal upheld the conviction, saying the broken beer bottle had been converted into an attack tool, not a beverage-delivery device. **Mitigating factor:** Mark, may we introduce you to this blowup doll?

31) 'PLAY: THE POWER OF IDEAS' KID

Anyone who attended the 2019 Newport Beach Film Festival (NBFF) this spring saw before each program a trailer promoting the event. Directed by Johan Stahl from a script by Garage Team Mazda creative director Melissa Webber and Daniel Bremmer, the short film commissioned by NBFF featured images of a little boy playing with a toy figure, shark, car, airplane and his food while adults in the real world suffered the horrific fates he simulated. It ends with the lad twisting around the head of a toy policeman as a real cop's noggin spins like Regan's in *The Exorcist*. A shot of waves crashing on the beach are accompanied by the words "Newport Beach. The Power of Ideas." **Mitigating factor:** The kid's good, but he's no Bill. "You're a bad man! You're a very bad man!" Mumy from the "It's a Good Life" *Twilight Zone* episode.

*calendar

sunday
HERE'S LOOKING AT

ADRIA IVANITSKY

fri/11/01

[AMUSEMENT PARKS]

Night of the Creeps

Día de los Muertos

This weekend, say *adios* to Dark Harbor at the *Queen Mary* (and our personal favorite monster event) with this *Día de los Muertos* finale. For one last night, the dead will rise to stalk and scare you. And if you dare, this is your last chance to venture into one of Dark Harbor's many mazes that are "so daunting you'll sell your soul for a chance to survive." There's also live music, creepy sideshow acts, themed food (such as fried brains, which are actually funnel cakes) and terrifying creatures lurking around every corner. Get one more horror fix before Christmas descends on us all.

Día de los Muertos at Dark Harbor at the *Queen Mary*, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 499-1739, www.facebook.com/queenmarysdarkharbor. 7 p.m. $39–$229. —ERIN DEWITT

[FAMILY EVENTS]

Dino-Mite!

Jurassic Quest

We will never get close to walking with living, breathing dinosaurs, but lovers of the prehistoric reptiles will surely get a kick out of this traveling exhibit. Jurassic Quest is an immersive attraction that offers a fun and educational experience with more than 80 large-scale dinosaur models. Ride on animatronic dinosaurs, play paleontologist by partaking in fossil digs, learn various facts about the different types of dinosaurs and the times they lived in from experts giving tours, and even play with baby dinos. Kids can dive into the bounce house, make crafts and even create their own fossils to take home—a dino-lover's dream. Check out this amazing attraction before it goes extinct!

Jurassic Quest at OC Fair and Event Center, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-1500, jurassicquest.com. 3 p.m., also Sat.-Sun. $20–$36. —AIMEE MURILLO

sat/11/02

[FESTIVAL]

FASHION FORWARD

ComplexCon

Celebrating the best in pop culture, music, food, innovation and activism, ComplexCon returns to Long Beach. Though it's had some hiccups over the years, the event is easily one of the city's most popular—and with good reason. Featuring Kid Cudi, Rico Nasty, Anderson .Paak & the Free Nationals, and A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie, among others, the music lineup should keep attendees entertained. And the best in streetwear brands will represent, with limited-edition pop-up shops hawking rare items that undoubtedly later end up on the secondary market. Add to that a sterling list of amazing food options, and it's easy to see why ComplexCon is a must-attend fall event.

ComplexCon at Long Beach Convention Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 436-3636, complexcon.com. 11 a.m.; also Sun. $60–$600. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

[HOLIDAY]

Gone But Not Forgotten

Noche de Altares

On a weekend that brings many wonderful *Día de los Muertos* events, *Noche de Altares* is among the most popular and visited in all of Orange County. Flower Street and Santa Ana Boulevard will be peppered with many a resplendent altar commemorating a lost loved one, idol or community group—there are always surprising but awesome, politically charged altars that raise awareness on issues such as bicyclist casualties, femicide and LGBT deaths. Witness the celebrations of lives loved and lost and get to know their stories, favorite objects, totems and interests, as told through beautifully decorated *ofrendas* set up by friends and family members. Expect a peaceful candle-lighting ceremony from the Catrina after sundown.

Noche de Altares on Flower Street and Santa Ana Boulevard, Santa Ana, nochedealtares.org. Noon. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

sun/11/03

[FAMILYEVENTS]

Brewery *Brujas*

La Ofrenda Magical Marketplace

Halloween has passed, but you still want to enjoy the seasonal spooky spell, so it's a good thing that Witches Brew is whipping up a magical marketplace at Towne Park Brewery in the name of *Día de Los Muertos*. The all-ages event will feature sugar-skull face painting, live altar displays, tarot readings, photo ops, DJ sets, food trucks, and more than a dozen vendors selling ghoulish and spooky delights. Feel free to don your best Day of the Dead apparel as you haunt the brewery with goodly spirited fiends.

Witches Brew's *La Ofrenda* Magical Marketplace at Towne Park Brewery and Taproom, 1566 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 844-2492, witchesbrewla.com. 4 p.m. Free. —SCOTTFEINBLATT

[CONCERT]

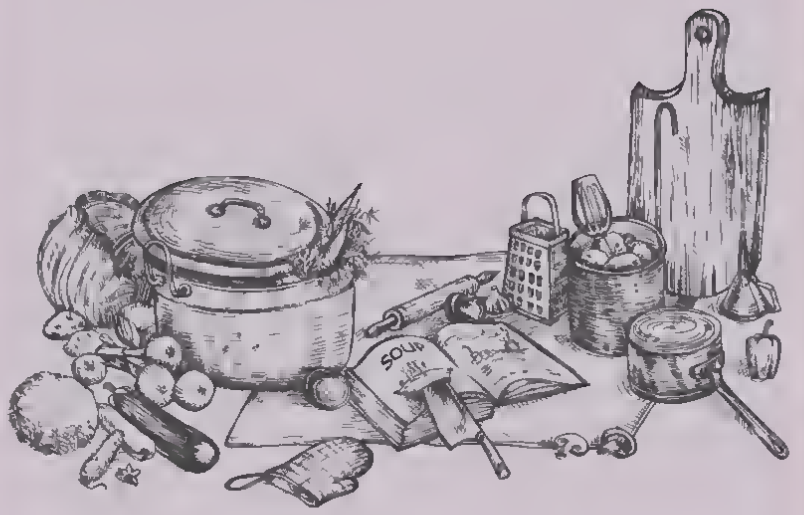
Can't Relax

The Shivas

Portland's own Shivas are one of the leading garage-rock outfits of our time, blending superb psychedelic elements with punk-rock energy. The band's true greatness lies in their stunning live performances, for which each member goes wild with abandon. That relentless fervor is what has driven the quartet forward since their inception in 2006, as they've blown the doors off any and every venue for audiences of all ages. Their latest album, *Dark Thoughts*, sees the Shivas in a new phase, with such lyrical themes as navigating one's self-growth and confronting inner demons—you know, the usual life stuff. Don't miss this chance to have them blow your socks off.

The Shivas with Lunch Lady at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 234-8292, alexsbar.com. 8 p.m. $7-$10. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

RESTAURANT ISSUE 2019



PUBLISHES 11/14/19

OCWEEKLY. ORANGE COUNTY'S LEADING SOURCE OF NEWS, CULTURE, AND ENTERTAINMENT

mon/11/04

[ART]

Comics Unleashed

'Flag Sail Wing: New Collages by Richard Kraft'

If you love comics, you're going to—*kapow!*—bubble over the comics-collage artwork of Richard Kraft. In his new large-scale series, Kraft mashes up excised comic-book images and literary texts to create glorious interruptions, perceptive paradoxes and demystifying deconstructions of the world around us. New meanings in the familiar are found in each scene, tilting perspective through twisty humor and inky fun. Catch this illustrious array of illustration!

"Flag Sail Wing: New Collages by Richard Kraft" at Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion, Orange Coast College, 2701 Fairview Ave., Costa Mesa, (714) 432-5738, www.orangecoastcollege.edu. 11 a.m. Through Dec. 5. Free. —SR DAVIES

tue/11/05

[CONCERT]

New Classics

Delirium Musicum

Los Angeles' Delirium Musicum brings a fresh approach to classical music that will inspire new ways of understanding and appreciating the form. Composed of up-and-coming classically trained musicians, the small chamber orchestra isn't led by a conductor during performances, which allows the group to find an inner synergy that only their close bond and trust can employ. What results is an animated concert of exceptional interpretations of classical and contemporary songs, with an equal share of sticking to the sheet notes and riffing spontaneously.

Delirium Musicum at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6595, themuck.org. 7:30 p.m. $25-$30. —AIMEE MURILLO

Pastor Joe & Therese Furey

HisPlace Westminster
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hisplace.com/wm/

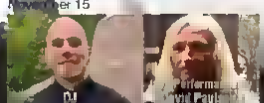
LIVING FREE
FRIDAY NIGHT RECOVERY | Every Friday Night

Dinner: 6-7pm | $3
Music: 7-7:30pm
Speakers: 7:30-8pm
Breakout Groups: 8-9pm
Addiction Groups
Steppin Out: Relapse prevention for those in first 9 months of sobriety
Women's 12 Step Group
Men's 12 Step Group
Codependency Group
Freedom from codependency
Child Care Provided (9m-12yrs)
Court Cards Signed

SPEAKER TOPIC
LIFE AFTER DEATH
November 1

SPEAKER TOPIC
OVERCOMING THE POWER OF ADDICTION
November 8

SPECIAL TOPIC
NO DISCIPLINE NO RECOVERY
November 15



wed/11/06

[COMEDY]

LISTEN UP
David Sedaris

"Life is comedy for those who think," wrote Horace Walpole, "and tragedy for those who feel." We might remember this, if not adopt its insight. Or forget—and plan on being reminded by David Sedaris, celebrated diarist, public-radio personality, *New Yorker* magazine essayist, wit, aphorist, marmoinst and public intellectual whose life and literary roles—department-store elf (*Santaland Diaries*), son, brother, gay man of letters—include groom, travel guide to late-middle-age and expat political observer. His humorous, self-deprecating, confessional voice has revived an all-American Chautauqua-style community of thoughtful, compassionate listeners to stones of the examined life. The Barclay Theatre is, we both feel and think, a great place to listen to him read from *Calypso*, his latest essay collection.

David Sedaris at the Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-4646, www.thebarclay.org. 8 p.m.; also Thurs., Nov. 7. $43-$110. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

COURTESY OF LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

[THEATER]

Kids These Days
Matilda the Musical

While Mara Wilson embodied Roald Dahl's titular heroine in the 1996 film with adorable spunk, the new musical adaptation uses a wondrous book by Dennis Kelly and music and lyrics by Tim Minchin. Here, the musical follows the young Matilda Wormwood as she endures many a humiliation from the adults in her orbit, namely the dictatorial school headmistress Miss Trunchbull. But thanks to her special powers, she uplifts herself and her soft-hearted classmates from Trunchbull's regime for good. With spectacular song-and-dance numbers that round out secondary characters and bring more depth to the story, this sensational theatrical production provides new enjoyment to the classic you remember.

Matilda the Musical at La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts, 14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada, (714) 994-6310, lamiradatheatre.com. 7:30 p.m. Through Nov. 17. $14-$60. —AIMEE MURILLO

thu/11/07

CHRIS CASELLA

[CONCERT]

Back to Basics
Melvins

It's a bill that would have made the notoriously surly Kurt Cobain smile. On what will be the second-to-last night of their nationwide tour, legendary noise rockers the Melvins bring their fuzzy energy to one of the best and smallest venues on this journey at Alex's Bar. Everything about the Melvins playing here feels absolutely right and aligns perfectly with their ethos. Though they don't release music very often, the sludge rockers mostly have the same three-piece that made them one of the Pacific Northwest's most influential outfits, with Buzz Osborne and Dale Crover still going at it. Expect a heavy dose of in-your-face rock that will bring back why you loved these guys in the first place.

Melvins and Redd Kross at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 234-8292, alexsbar.com. 8 p.m. $35. 21+. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

[THEATER]

REALLY WEIRD SCIENCE
Reading Frankenstein

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has been hailed as the first true science-fiction novel. It's a tight story about the troubled Dr. Victor Frankenstein and the hideous but articulate creature he built from discarded body parts. Now, UCI Illuminations has its own take on that timeless tale with *Reading Frankenstein*, an intermedia performance created by Annie Loul, Antoinette LaFarge and Jim Fallon. In it, an artificial-life scientist named Mary Shelley discovers that one of her experiments goes out of control at the same time she starts obsessing over the novel *Frankenstein*. Sounds fun.

Reading Frankenstein at Experimental Media and Performance Lab, UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts, 4000 Mesa Rd., Irvine, (949) 824-2787, arts.uci.edu/event/reading-frankenstein. 8 p.m. Through Nov. 8. Free, but reservations required. —ANTHONY PIGNATARO

PHOTOS BY EDWIN GOEI

Something to Taco 'Bout

Navarro's Taqueria is the newest taco shop to try in Santa Ana

BY EDWIN GOEI

Clack-clack-clack. Sizzle-sizzle-sizzle. As soon as I stepped into Navarro's Taqueria, I heard the familiar and comforting noise of a metal spade pushing and scraping seasoned bits of fried meat across a hot griddle. I smelled the aroma, too, as it wafted through the room. Both triggered a Pavlovian response. My senses told me that I'm going to eat tacos—lots of them—and very soon. But as I ordered my food, I noticed that what I heard and smelled couldn't have been coming from the cook I saw in the kitchen behind the cashier. That gent, at this point, was only heating a few tortillas on his cooktop.

It wasn't until I rounded the corner and looked on the other side of the walled-off kitchen that I found the second *taquero*. He operated a portable taco cart, the kind that could be rolled onto the back of a truck. The *taqueria*'s Yelp page says Navarro's catered parties prior to being a brick-and-mortar in Whittier and before moving here, so it would be a good guess that Navarro's began as a street cart, as good taco shops often do.

Squeezed between a gas station and an auto mechanic, the squat shack that Navarro's now occupies used to be a money-transfer office at which you could also refill water jugs. Before that, it was another taco stand. But if you haven't been in the neighborhood in a decade, you would swear it's always been a taco shop—*this* taco shop. And even though Navarro's is only a few months old, it already has the hallmarks of a tried-and-true Santa Ana *taqueria*. Horchata and jamaica gurgle in a circulating beverage dispenser. If you want a Jarritos or Mexican Coke, you pay the cashier and grab the bottle yourself from a fridge next to the salsa bar. No one tells you where the bottle opener is, but you know by instinct it's by the cash register. And when you order taquitos, they come in groups of three and buried under so much lettuce it counts as a salad.

Navarro's, however, does have one thing in common with all latter-day taco stands: birria, the current trend in new *taquerias*. And when I tried the familiar three tacos de birria combo here—which includes the consomme in a Styrofoam cup—I noticed that the cook folded the special orange tortilla around the stewed beef on the griddle, almost sealing it in. But Navarro's birria tacos are a different species than those served at La Super Birria, the most recent specialist to open in the past year; the meat is leaner here, and the consomme doesn't taste so much like meat drippings as it does a highly seasoned herbal tea.

While the *taquero* in the kitchen oversees the birria tacos, the *taquero* at the cart makes the regular tacos. All sorts of meats, from asada to al pastor, crisp slowly in the perimeter of his shallow circular pan, which resembles a hubcap. The bulge in the middle is a comal on which tortillas could be warmed. But this *taquero* has another section of the cart he uses for that—a heating platform with a series of holes that emit steam from below. If you ran into this cart on the street at night, you wouldn't be able to resist. With everything on display—meat, tortilla, onions and cilantro—it promises instant taco gratification.

At the direction of the cashier, the cart *taquero* immediately got to work on my order. It didn't take long. In one fluid motion, he took a pair of tortillas and placed them atop a steaming hill of asada, then pinched the tortillas as though they were tongs to grab wads of meat and flipped them over. My tacos were assembled faster than I could say, *"Gracias."*

I took my plate to the patio. Cars zoomed by on the busy street, but I was shaded from the sun by a tarp and sat behind a fence bordered by plants that flapped in the autumn breeze. I smothered a taco with salsa, picked it up, cocked my head to the side and bit. My teeth sank into the steamed softness of the tortilla. My eyes rolled to the back of my head. The asada was crisp, a little burnt on the edges—just how I like it. The al pastor was even crispier, loaded with spices and achiote. On all the tacos, the red onions were chopped so finely they were almost minced. As I chewed, I did some math. Navarro's charges $1.32 per taco; I could get a third, be full and still fall below the $5 mark. And it's wasn't even Taco Tuesday.

NAVARRO'S TAQUERIA
1535 S. Standard Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 486-1063. Open Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat.-Sun., 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Tacos start at $1.32. No alcohol.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

Cool Ecology

It's tough to get the word out for any first-time event, more so when it's a potential day trip. But when an event such as Convergence Harvest comes online and benefits something as cool as our local Ecology Center, it's definitely worth seeking out.

Put on by farmers, creameries, fishmongers, chefs, craft brewers and vintners, Convergence Harvest will take over the gorgeous Temecula Olive Oil Ranch in Aguanga, just east of Temecula. Each purveyor is bringing the bounty of their harvest to the festival.

"There's not really any events that are fresh-pressing and celebrating olives and olive oil," says Jack Ford, farmer, cheesemaker and event curator. "These are chefs and food artisans that we've all worked with over the years ... they're not only the best chefs in our region, but they're also value-based chefs that match a sustainable template to their creativity."

Among the chefs expected are Drew Deckman from El Mogor in Baja, with impeccable sustainable fish, Tim "TK" Kolanko from DC's Cucina Enoteca, and *MasterChef* winner (and Telemundo's *MasterChef Latino*) Claudia Sandoval. On the fun and boozy side, attendees will be offered samples from Rough Draft; SR76; Refuge Brewery; Bobe Kombucha, local all-natural, eco-friendly wineries; and Raging Mead & Cider, which naturally ferments its beverages. "Dave Carr from Raging is a huge eco warrior who has helped restore old stonefruit orchards ... and his cider transports you to Normandy," reports Ford.

Potentially tax-deductible $125 tickets for the Nov. 2 event are available via convergenceharvest2019.splashthat.com.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

GREG NAGEL

OC WEEKLY'S CURATION OF THE LATEST FOOD & DRINK NEWS OF THE WEEK, COMPLETE WITH RESTAURANT REVIEWS & EVENT PICKS

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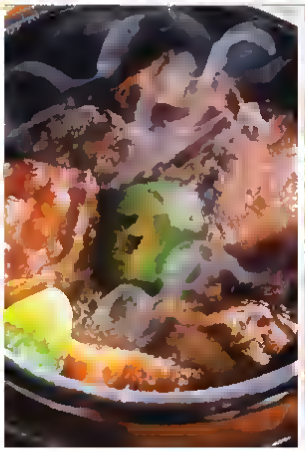


PHOTOS BY PATRICK MANALO

Come for the Spring Rolls

Then stay for everything else at Hoa Sen

In the waning afternoon light, with its faded lotus and modest emerald awning, Hoa Sen seems almost ethereal. Even the plastic stools stacked like poker chips appear serene. And when you enter, this feeling lingers. But the interior is not unlike many Vietnamese vegetarian restaurants in the area, just as in other places, glowing televisions with Buddha grace the screens and neon orchids loom in the background.

When the waitress arrives, you'll realize you need to order and shake yourself out of your reverie. The spring rolls are almost obligatory here, with layered, fried egg-roll wrappers making for an unexpected crunch between small slabs of meaty barbecue "pork." It's not unusual to meet a couple from Los Angeles that have made the trek just for the little bundles. The bánh xèo, a thin rice pancake the size of your forearm and curiously titled "Vietnamese pizza" on the menu, comes served with the usual bouquet of dark-purple shiso and lettuce. Hoa Sen's bánh xèo is crunchier and simpler than, say, the version you'll find at Westminster's Golden Flower Veggie. But the crispier texture works in its favor, creating an almost chip-like bite that contrasts brilliantly with the soft, meaty tofu cubes and bean sprouts inside.

Flanked by slices of bean curd speckled with whole peppercorn, the bánh cuon is homey. While the sliced "meatballs" can be skipped, as the peppercorn can be unpleasant against the plain flavor, the soft, gummy rice sheets create the perfect blanket for swaddling the funky minced mushrooms and tofu.

If you begin to notice steaming plates of vegetables being ushered to the next table over, take it as a sign to try the pho áp chao gòn. Wide, thick noodles are pan-fried into a caramelized, golden nest that might remind you of something sticky and sweet you ate at a fair once, while the top remains a slippery layer of tender noodles. Glistening bok choy, broccoli and ribbed carrots sauteed in garlic and soy sauce are gently placed on top, along with wedges of browned tofu. You'll want to mix in the little pile of cilantro in there, as it makes all the difference in distinguishing the flavors in this complex dish.

The ca kho can also be excellent; quartered tofu "catfish" is braised in velvety nuoc mau, a dark and bittersweet caramel sauce found at the heart of many Vietnamese dishes. It can be a precarious dish, and the last time I got it, the "catfish" was cooked too long, resulting in something a little too chewy. Still, the hot-and-sweet "skin" maintained that coveted fatty, silky texture, so I'll probably order it again anyway.

THE ROOT
» CHARISMA MADARANG

HOA SEN VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT
12180 Brookhurst St., Garden Grove, (714) 537-0077

PHOTOS BY GREG NAGEL

Like a Billionaire's Cat

Purring through drinks at the Guild Club and dinner at ARC Restaurant

Polaroiditis What happens to your eyes when you walk into a dimly lit bar in broad daylight, causing your vision to slowly develop and adjust to the darkness. I recently suffered from a mean case of it as I entered the Guild Club in Costa Mesa, where it seemed as if all I could see were eyeballs mysteriously pointed at me, as though they belonged to some kind of wild animals in a dark forest

One set of those eyes belonged to Marín von Blōm, who, along with husband Noah, is the creator of said bar and has run the adjoining ARC Restaurant, as well as a new butchery and bakery in nearby Newport Beach. Up until now, the Guild Club had been a private affair, but we stopped in for a little pre-dinner cocktail and snack.

With its dark-wood furniture, classic chairs and eclectic mix of accents, the interior feels as if it's been there a long time "I got these lamps in France," mentions Marín, pointing at a couple of monkey lamps As she gestures at a framed Appaloosa with braids, she adds, "The rest of the space was designed around this painting."

There's a mysterious spiral staircase that leads above the bar to a space that resembles a billionaire's cat cozy "We have bands that play up there a few nights a week," says Marín, batting her lashes

It all seems so Alice in Wonderland, I reply, as I twirl the hunk of hand-carved clear ice in my cocktail, an old fashioned named Twain that uses a 10-year-old Pappy Van Winkle as its base

The cocktail list is just as intimate as the room, with only a handful of concoctions named after notable people's booze choices There's the Churchill, a Macallan 15 triple-cask Scotch and soda, and the El Chapo, a Clase Azul tequila-based drink. You can also order the Girlfriend, which is a whim of the day

As our ARC reservation neared, we munched down the last of our crispy, earthy fried olives stuffed with blue cheese. We then headed through a secret padded door into the main restaurant—as though we were rock stars.

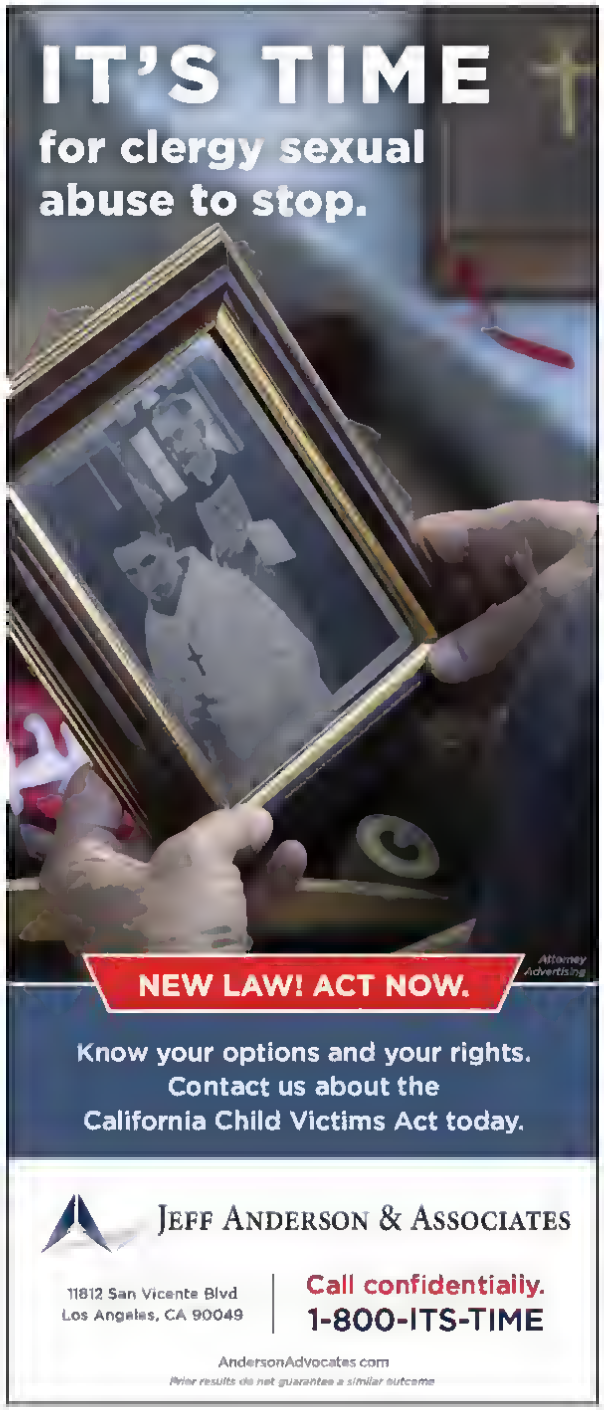
ARC oozes personality from every angle On the surface, it can resemble some sort of swanky date-nite joint, but after marinating in its ambiance after a drink or two, it can feel like a place you might have stumbled into while on vacation abroad. The open-fire kitchen tempts you with primal prescriptions for whatever the day throws at you.

When the food arrived, I noted the thick-cut bacon was glazed as though it were a maple-bar doughnut and the fire-roasted duck had skin spots as crispy as Lay's potato chips despite the juices held within. The absolute must thing to order, though, is the Butcher's Love, a hard-to-find prime-rib cap steak that's the best of the best part of the cow and eats like beef sushi. ARC serves it seared and with salt, pepper and herbs to dredge each slice through. If I were a billionaire's cat, I would be purring

Eat & Drink This Now

» GREG NAGEL

THE GUILD CLUB AND ARC RESTAURANT
at SOCO & the OC Mix, 3321 Hyland Ave , Costa Mesa; theguildclub com, arcrestaurant.com



LEFT: COURTESY OF MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN FILMS; RIGHT: COURTESY OF DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL AMSTERDAM

Get Out!

Films at Laguna Beach's new festival and museum celebrate art and nature

BY MATT COKER

A new film festival joins the Orange County cinephile hopper this week, and though promoters want ticket buyers to sit inside darkened venues in Laguna Beach, they also want them to go outside and explore the great outdoors.

The three-day Coast Film Festival (CFF), which kicks off Thursday, Nov. 7, includes art, music, photography and, of course, movies at venues throughout Laguna Beach's village and canyon, including Forum Theater, Hobie Surf Shop, Marine Room Tavern, and the beautiful Seven 7 Seven restaurant and wedding venue.

The CFF was founded and is co-produced by Ben Warner, who is a principal at Skeleton Key Agency and has an extensive background in the outdoor industry. Co-founders are Warner's Skeleton Key Agency partner Ben Classen and sports marketer Enoch Harris, who produced the recent documentary *Andy Irons: Kissed By God*. The trio expects the fest to become an annual event.

"The mission of CFF is to create a showcase for creatives who are telling compelling stories through inspirational film, photography or art," says Warner. "It is also designed to broaden the conversation around preservation of our natural environment and to motivate audiences to get outside more while also protecting these resources for a more sustainable future for generations to come."

Up first is Angel Marin and Patricio Mekis' Patagonia-sponsored documentary *Los Plásticos*, which follows three surfers to a small island off the Chilean coast where residents successfully protect their wild waters and fisheries as they call outsiders "*plásticos*." That's followed by a live conversation between legendary South County waterman and environmentalist Greg Long and action-sports commentator Pat Parnell, and then comes the opening-night party.

The following morning, on Nov. 8, film producers make presentations to Laguna Beach students. The evening program includes food, live music, a cash bar, and a curated exhibit of art for sale by known and emerging artists and photographers.

Friday's Filmmaker Showcase presents the Teton Gravity Research features *Wunderland* (co-directors Todd Jones, Steve Jones and Jon Klaczkiewicz's celebration of ski and snowboard culture) and Steve Jones and Klaczkiewicz's *Roadless* (in which three snowboarders embark on a 10-day, human-powered exploration of untamed parts of Wyoming), plus the West Coast premiere of *Fire On the Mountain*, which is also the Saturday-night film. Narrated by basketball legend Bill Walton, the surf/ski/snowboard film from directors Chris Benchetler and Tyler Hamlet is the first action-sports movie to be merged with music by the Grateful Dead. Afterward, Parnell leads a discussion with the filmmakers and featured athletes, whom you can later meet in person in the High West Whiski VIP lounge at Seven 7 Seven if you have an all-access pass or you paid an additional $45 for entry. (Besides the main festival website, Friday event tickets can be purchased through tetongravityresearch.com.)

It's the morning of the final day that includes the outdoor events: a beach cleanup with the Surfrider Foundation at Aliso Beach and a canyon nature hike with Laguna Canyon Foundation. Short-film programs fill the day, starting at 10 a.m. with "Healed by Nature," a collection of inspirational shorts on people whose lives changed through outdoor activities. Afterward, Parnell interviews North Face ambassador Stacy Bare, a former military serviceman and substance abuser who got clean thanks to climbing.

"Our Public Lands" is a program of short films that celebrate parks, other public lands and monuments, including Greg MacGillivray's *National Parks Adventure*. The award-winning filmmaker and co-founder of the Laguna Beach large-format nature-movie production company MacGillivray Freeman Films is then interviewed by Parnell.

"Our Oceans" has shorts that showcase the wonder and power of the seas while also raising awareness of increased plastic pollution and the impact by climate change, which Surfrider CEO Chad Nelsen addresses afterward with Parnell.

The afternoon also includes a collection of surf, nature, running and mountain biking shorts titled "Get Outside!" Professional athletes who have built careers in the outdoors are then interviewed by Parnell.

The Saturday closing-night VIP lounge entry fee is $75. A limited number of $250 all-access passes to every Coast Film Festival ticketed event are now on sale. Included are access to all VIP lounges; first-come, first-served reserved seating at events, and a gift bag.

The intersection of art and nature is also celebrated with, appropriately enough, "Art & Nature," Laguna Art Museum's seventh-annual multidisciplinary exploration of art's many and various engagements with the natural world.

"Art & Nature" includes a panel discussion, a free family festival and a commissioned art exhibit that will be on view from Thursday, Nov. 7 through Jan. 5, 2020. There is also a Nov. 9 screening of *A Boy's Dream*, Walther Grotenhuis and Cinta Forger's 2015 documentary on Theo Jansen, a Dutch artist who creates large-scale "beach animals" that move independently, powered by the wind.

Jansen's almost-mythical beings, which are made from manipulated plastic tubes, tie wraps and sails, can lumber across the sand. "I am creating a new piece of nature, adding a new species," the master says of the creations he calls *strandbeesten*. To his dismay, especially as he grows older, they can't live without him. Just like we can't without nature.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

COAST FILM FESTIVAL

at Hobie Surf Shop, 294 Forest Ave., Marine Room Tavern, 214 Ocean Ave., Forum Theater, 650 Laguna Canyon Rd., and Seven 7 Seven, 777 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, coastfilmfestival.com. Nov. 7-9. Free to $20 per event; single-day passes, $55-$75, all-access passes, $250

A BOY'S DREAM

at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971. Nov. 9, 11:30 a.m. Free with museum admission ($5-$7, museum members and kids aged 17 and younger, free).

Even Smiling Makes My Face Ache

BY MATT COKER

Halloween Movie Marathon. Scary flicks are part of a holiday celebration that also includes free candy, ghoulish tunes and frightful surprises. *The 4th Horseman, (562) 513-3394. Thurs., Oct. 31. Call for time. Free. 21+.*

Dolemite Is My Name. Eddie Murphy stars in a new biopic on the legendary Rudy Ray Moore and his success in creating a notable blaxploitation film and character. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Oct. 31, 2:30, 5:30 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Anime Afternoons. Come watch and discuss anime favorites. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs. & Thurs., Oct. 31 & Nov. 7, 6 p.m. Free.*

Halloween. In John Carpenter's 1978 horror classic, 6-year-old Michael Myers (Will Sandin) killed his sister on Halloween night 1963. Fast forward 15 years and Myers (Tony Moran) escapes from a mental hospital and returns to the small town of Haddonfield to kill some more. As a teen trying to escape Mikey, Jamie Lee Curtis turned in a career-defining performance. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., Oct. 31, 6:30 p.m. $9-$12; also at the Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Oct. 31, 8 p.m. $7-10.50.*

One Piece: Stampede. Takashi Otsuka's new anime is based on a story by Eiichiro Oda, the creator of the franchise celebrating its 20th anniversary. Pirates from around the world gather at the Pirates Expo to hunt for Gol D. Roger's lost treasure. Presented in Japanese with English subtitles. *Starlight Cinema City, (714) 970-6700; also at Starlight Triangle Cinemas, (714) 650-4300. Thurs., Oct. 31, 7:30 p.m. $6-$12.*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. The pioneering midnight movie starts with the car of sweethearts Brad and Janet (Barry Bostwick and Susan Sarandon) breaking down near the eerie mansion of Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry). The transvestite scientist's home also hosts a rocking biker (Meat Loaf), a creepy butler (Richard O'Brien) and assorted freaks, including a hunk of beefcake named "Rocky." Live shadow-cast troupe Midnight Insanity performs. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., Oct. 31, 9 p.m. Sat., 11:55 p.m. $9-$12.*

Dolemite. Director D'Urville Martin's 1975 crime epic, which is regarded as one of Blaxploitation's greatest achievements, can be seen in the same theater as the capper to a double feature with *Dolemite Is My Name* starring Murphy (see above). After two years in prison on trumped-up charges, pimp Dolemite (aforementioned rap pioneer/standup comic Moore) returns to the streets to settle scores. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Oct. 31, 10 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

First Love. In Takashi Miike's new crime drama, a terminally ill boxer and a drug-addicted call girl fall passionately in love as two warring gangs spray bullets and blood all around them. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., Sat. & Mon.-Thurs., Nov. 7, 10 p.m., Sun., 8 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Little Monsters. In Abe Forsythe's new indie horror-comedy, a down-and-out fellow (Alexander England) serves as a chaperone for his nephew's kindergarten-class field trip and falls hard for the group's teacher (Lupita Nyong'o). But a zombie invasion breaking out has the new couple joining the kindergarteners and an obnoxious children's TV personality (Josh Gad) in a fight to stay alive. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri. Sat., 10:30 p.m., Sun., 8:30 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Burned. Ryan Bergez's 2018 drama is about a pregnant widow who accidentally runs her car into a homeless man whom she quickly recognizes as her supposedly dead husband. He does not remember who he—let alone she—is, so she invites him into her home in hopes of jogging his memory. *Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m. $9-$10.*

DanTDM Presents the Contest. The YouTube superstar provides fans with an engaging gaming experience and an immersive story. Audience members are encouraged to wear their tribe's colors as they seek the hoisting of the Mega Cup. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Sat., 12:55 p.m. $15.*

Canelo Alvarez vs. Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev. Broadcast live into theaters from the MGM Grand in Las Vegas is Canelo Alvarez, the face of boxing and the king of the middleweight division, in a title bout against champion Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Sat., 6 p.m. $20.*

OC Film Fiesta. This year's cinex travaganza concludes with a community screening of Jorge R. Gutiérrez's 2014 animated comedy *The Book of Life*. Mexican childhood friends Manolo (voiced by Diego Luna) and Joaquin (Channing Tatum) both want to marry their mutual *amiga* Maria (Zoë Saldana), but the love triangle is even more complicated by battling husband-and-wife deities. *The Source OC, thesourceoc.com. Sun., 6 p.m. Free.*

Raging Bull. Martin Scorsese's 1980 masterpiece is a biopic on boxing champ Jake LaMotta (Robert De Niro). Violent in and out of the ring, LaMotta had his inner rage ultimately destroy his life. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Mon.-Tues., 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Christmas Jars. Jonathan Wright's new drama is based on Jason F. Wright's bestselling novel about a reporter (Jeni Ross) who uncovers the secret behind money-filled jars given anonymously to people in need during the holidays. *Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Mon., 7 p.m. $15.*

Borders and Belonging: A Film Series. The UC Irvine Humanities Center and European Languages and Studies kick off a series of three films that explore migration, integration and transformation in the European context. Up first is Andrè Segre's 2011 Italian drama *Shun Li and the Poet*, which is about the friendship that develops between a Chinese woman (Tao Zhao) and a fisherman (Rade Serbedzija) who came to Italy from Yugoslavia many years before. *UC Irvine, (949) 824-6117. Mon., 7:30 p.m.*

Easy A. Teen Movie Night presents Will Gluck's 2010 rom-dramedy about a high-school student (Emma Stone) who relies on the school's rumor mill to advance her social and financial standing. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Tues., 6 p.m. Free.*

The Deer Hunter. Michael Cimino's breath-vacuuming 1978 Vietnam War film is about three Pennsylvania deer-hunting pals and steelworkers (Robert De Niro, John Savage and Christopher Walken) having their lives change forever after they enlist, get captured by the Viet Cong and are subjected to great torments. *Cinépolis Luxury Cinemas Laguna Niguel at Ocean Ranch Village, (949) 373-7900; also at Cinépolis Luxury Cinemas Rancho Santa Margarita at Santa Margarita Town Center, (949) 835-1888. Tues., 7 p.m. $10.*

The Public. FPL Arthouse presents this 2018 drama about a Cincinnati librarian (Emilio Estevez, who also wrote and directed) helping a group of homeless people take refuge at the free public library to survive a brutal winter night. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Wed. 6 p.m. Free.*

The Divine Plan. Robert Orlando's documentary argues that President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II knew that their lives were spared in assassination attempts six months apart so they would go on to defeat communism and live out the Divine Plan. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Wed., 7 p.m. $12.50.*

Taxi Driver. "You talking to me?" Marty Scorsese's most disturbingly brilliant film has cabbie Travis Bickle (expertly channeled through Robert De Niro) experience loneliness, violence and insanity as he becomes much too obsessed with cleaning up the scum of mid-1970s New York. *South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701. Wed. 7:30 p.m. $9.*

Slayer: The Repentless Killogy. In BJ McDonnell and Wayne Isham's new musical, the tunes of metal legends Slayer are layered over a story about a former neo-Nazi (Jason Trost) squaring off against his ex-gang to avenge the death of the girlfriend (Ashley L. Osborne) who was murdered in front of him. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Wed.-Thurs., Nov. 7, 8 p.m. $7-$10.50.*

Mars Attacks! Tim Burton's 1996 sci-fi comedy is about Earth being invaded by Martians with unbeatable weapons and a cruel sense of humor. *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327. Thurs., Nov. 7, 1 p.m. Free.*

Coast Film Festival. See "Get Out!," page 18. *Thurs., Nov. 7. Los Plástico screening and Greg Long discussion at Hobie Surf Shop, 294 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach, coastfilmfestival.com. 7 p.m. $10; opening-night party at Marine Room Tavern, 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach; coastfilmfestival.com. 9 p.m. Free to those 21+ with ticket for Los Plástico. Festival continues through Nov. 9.*

L'ora Legale. Italian Movie Night presents a 2017 comedy from co-directors and stars Ficarra & Picone, whose fame in Italy is so vast they can go with one name each like Cher. A Sicilian town's new mayor promises to bring order and legality, an impossible feat in that town, Sicily and Italy. Presented in Italian with English subtitles. *Regency San Juan Capistrano, (949) 661-3456. Thurs., Nov. 7, 7 p.m. $10.*

Lynyrd Skynyrd: Last of The Street Survivors Farewell Tour. Shaun Silva's new rockumentary chronicles the band's final performance at TIAA Bank Field in Jacksonville, Florida, in 2018. Band members share in interviews their experiences on the farewell tour and what performing together has meant to them. *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Nov. 7, 7 p.m. $14-$17.*

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COURTESY OF FOX USA

PHOTOS BY JORDAN KURAT/SCR

Mastering the Art of Life

Food and feelings fuel Julia Cho's *Aubergine* at SCR

BY JOEL BEERS

If talking and reading about food, watching shows about it, and, of course, eating it, is your great passion, you will probably love Julia Cho's play *Aubergine*.

However, if your take on food is more like Thoreau's—food is fuel, and you eat to survive—you may also love it. Because while the preparation and consuming of food plays a big part in Cho's beautifully written work, it's as much about food as it is the Korean American characters at its center. Which is everything. And nothing.

For Cho is a playwright graced with the rare and remarkable gift of making the personal universal, with the "what" that happens in her plays less important than the "why" it's happening. Much like her masterfully written *The Language Archive*, which premiered at South Coast Repertory in 2010 and centered on a married couple documenting dying languages around the globe who were unable to communicate with each other, *Aubergine* is a play that uses those most effable of human constructs—words—to try to grasp the most ineffable mysteries of human existence: life, loss, death and the vagaries of memory.

And what you take away from it will hinge far more on how willing you are to absorb those Big Questions than whether your salivary glands moisten at learning that *aubergine* is another name for eggplant, or how to cook the perfect pastrami sandwich.

Ray (a wonderfully deceptive Jinn S. Kim, who lives rather than telegraphs his transformation from cold and insular to fully engaged person) is a type-A chef who took to the kitchen mostly because his father, who immigrated to America after the Korean War, never stepped foot in it. But when he learns that his father (Sab Shimono, who either has the easiest or most difficult job imaginable, as he lies near comatose for most of the production) is terminally ill, his culinary interests disappear.

Forced to care for his father, Ray subsists on cans of beer and Ensure. But mostly he seems to be eating the words and questions he could never ask his father: Why was he so cheap? Why did he never show an interest in Ray's culinary gifts? Why did he loathe most food?

Into this desiccated garden spring two signs of vitality: Lucien (a thoroughly engaging Irungu Mutu), the hospice nurse assigned to Ray's father, and Cornelia (an equally vibrant Jully Lee), Ray's coworker and former girlfriend whom Ray mostly needs in order to communicate with his dad's brother back in Korea. Lucien and Cornelia, while both life-affirming characters in contrast to Ray and his father, who are either dying or paralyzed by death's presence, share different views on food. Lucien, an immigrant from an unnamed country who has seen his share of death, finds connection through food to all he's lost; Cornelia, who never lived up to her mother's expectations of devouring every bite of the mountains of food she heaped in front of her, hates it.

But for both, the concept of food is bundled in the notion of home, and ultimately, home is most what *Aubergine* is about. That becomes apparent when Ray's uncle from the old country (a very funny Bruce Baek) arrives. Though they rarely talked, Uncle is convinced all his brother needs is their mother's soup to revive him—and he's brought the turtle along to prove it.

Up to this point, this Lisa Peterson-helmed production works in every way; it's funny, albeit tending toward gallows humor, and though it wrestles with serious issues, it's quick-paced and accessible. But Cho seems to be in search of the perfect resolution, and there are a few short scenes near the end that hint at that search. It's not that the scenes feel superfluous, they just don't feel smoothly integrated into a play that is until then so seamless.

It's not until Ray joins his uncle in Seoul and his father is finally lain to rest that the stabs at resolution finally strike Cho's target: that death is less a transition into something else than a return to something that's been a part of us all along.

That's some heavy shit to wrap around your head on the page, the fact that Cho, augmented by her director and terrific cast, pulls it off onstage approaches the near-miraculous.

But no review of this show should fail to mention Joy DeMichelle's excellent bookending. I don't know if the character of Diane is essential, but DeMichelle owns it, and it gives a heartening uplift to a play rooted so deeply in the frightening, awful truth of how sweet life can be. And yeah, that's a Dylan reference, but who else to add that perfect seasoning to a dish all about effing the ineffable?

AUBERGINE

at South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555, scr.org. Tues.-Thurs., 7:30 p.m., Fri., 8 p.m. Sat., 2:30 & 8 p.m., Sun., 2 & 7 p.m. Through Nov. 16. $42-$88.

ARTS OVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

Nov. 1-7

***DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS*—A NIGHT OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURE.** More than 40 altars will be displayed while guests enjoy live mariachi music, crafts and Aztec dancers. Bringing lawn chairs and blankets for lounging is recommended. Fri., 5 p.m. Free. Downtown Anaheim Community Center, 250 E. Center St., Anaheim, (714) 765-5191, anaheim.net.

"THE CREATURE COMFORTS ART SHOW". Hurley and the Wetlands & Wildlife Care Center present a group show featuring local artists celebrating wildlife. Proceeds from sales will benefit the Center. Fri., 6 p.m. Free. Hurley Headquarters, 1945 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, (949) 548-9375, www.facebook.com/hurley.

NIGHT DIVE. The month's art-music-food event is *Día de los Muertos*-themed, with live performances by DJs and bands, on-site food trucks, husbandry presentations, and live artin the Tropical Pacific Gallery. Fri., 7:30 p.m. $19.95; members, free. 18+. Aquarium of the Pacific, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, (562) 590-3100; aquariumofpacific.com.

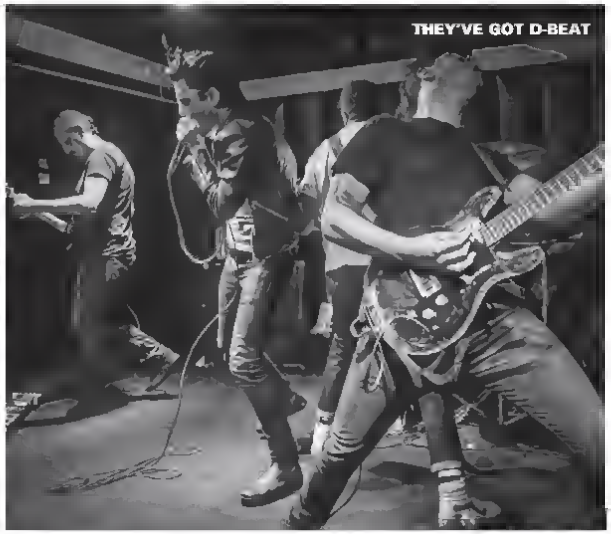
***DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS* CELEBRATION.** Guests can bring a photo of a deceased loved one for the communal altar; pastries, craft activities and face painting will be available. Bring blankets and lawn chairs for a special screening of *Coco* on the lawn. Sat., 6 p.m. Free. Harbor Lawn Mortuary, 1625 Gisler Ave., Costa Mesa, (714) 540-5554, www.dignitymemorial.com.

DINOSAUR DASH. Run in either the 13-mile, 10K or 5K race—all of the proceeds go toward the nonprofit Tustin Public Schools Foundation. Sun., 6 a.m. Registration $20-$125. Meets at Tustin Market Place, 2771 El Camino Real, Tustin. www.tpsf.net/dinodash.

PUPS & PLANES CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT. A paper airplane competition, with the chance to beat a Guinness World Record; the winner receives a $1,500 airline credit. A percent of beverage proceeds will be donated to Barks of Love Animal Rescue. Sun., 9 a.m. Free. 21+. Golden Road Pub, 2216 E. Orangewood Ave., Anaheim, (714) 912-4015; eventbrite.com.

"HERIBERTO LUNA". The painter combines pre-Columbian art with symbols and colors from his vibrant Mexican background. Open Tues.-Sun., noon-4 p.m. Through Dec. 29. Free. The Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6595, themuck.org.

ANASTASIA. In 1920s Paris, a young woman enlists the help of a conman and ex-aristocrat to help her uncover her mysterious link to the Russian empire. Tues.-Fri., 7:30 p.m., Sat., 2 & 7:30 p.m., Sun., 1 & 6:30 p.m. Through Nov. 17. $26-$120. Segerstrom Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org.



PHOTOS BY BECKY DIGIGLIO

See and Feel the Vibe

Deaf Club play loud, fast and weird

BY STEVE DONOFRIO

As Deaf Club took the stage at their first show, front man Justin Pearson paused to introduce the band. "We're Deaf Club," he announced. "We have a couple of songs. [We] hope you enjoy. And if you don't enjoy it, that's even better."

The next 15 minutes flew by as the group erupted into a series of blast beats, angular riffs and odd time signatures while Pearson shrieked into the microphone. Less than three months and zero live shows after that July performance, Deaf Club released their debut EP, *Contemporary Sickness*. Clocking in at just less than six minutes, the five tracks embody the band's rapid-fire sound and ethos. "We played one show, and then put out an EP," Pearson says. "Not a lot of bands are able to do that."

But with a lineup of well-seasoned musicians who've played with established bands such as ACxDC, Weak Flesh and Fissure, the feat wasn't as difficult for Deaf Club as it would be for most new bands. Pearson, who has been performing for nearly three decades, was recently dubbed "the hardest-working man in hardcore" by Alt Press, in addition to being a member of such groups as the Locust, Head Wound City, Swing Kids and Planet B over the years, he runs the San Diego-based Three One G record label, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Pearson has a long history of pushing musical limits. And this holds true for Deaf Club, as well. While there has been a resurgence of blast-beat-centric bands in recent years (whether you want to call it grindcore, power-violence or whatever other niche internet nerds like to argue about), many of these groups seem a bit formulaic. However, that's the last word that could be used to describe Deaf Club's music. "I don't understand why everybody feels like there are parameters," Pearson says. "I mean, you can do whatever the fuck you want. Maybe people won't like it, and maybe that's why people are like, 'We need to sound like this other band.' — Why do you need to try to sound like someone else? I think it's weird how people consciously and subconsciously limit themselves."

Much of the band's distinctive sound comes from guitarist Brian Amalfitano. While he's best known as the relentless riff machine for seminal Los Angeles hardcore band ACxDC, Deaf Club allows him to experiment quite a bit more. "He's really into pedals and making it sound super-crazy," Pearson explains. "And I'm into that kind of stuff, but I'm also like, 'Dude, I've never been in a band with, like, d-beat parts. Can we just get, like, super-crusty?' And he's not willing to do that. So it's kind of funny, but I think that contrast makes an interesting, maybe a unique sound. We don't sound like a typical hardcore band, it has this other element added to it."

That other element is a sonic lushness that's rarely heard in hardcore. For example, in "Bounced Reality Check," Amalfitano blazes through panic chords, more traditional-sounding punk riffs and atmospheric noise within seconds. At some points on the EP, it's difficult to believe he is producing such otherworldly sounds with a guitar.

And drummer Scott Osment sounds as if he has an extra pair of arms. As the group's engine, he does play some of the d-beat rhythms Pearson was yearning for, but he is constantly switching between odd syncopations and timing. His blast beats are impeccable, with clear, precise drum and cymbal hits. "[Scott] is incredible," Pearson says. "I've been so lucky to play with outstanding drummers, and he is up there with them."

Pearson typically doesn't start writing lyrics until the band has finished the music. Although most songs are well below the two-minute mark, there's so much crammed into them that one can only imagine how arduous the creative process must be. "It's mainly, from what I hear, just like Scott and Brian arguing for hours about shit," Pearson explains with a laugh. "They're both into just tweaking out on shit, so it becomes really complicated music."

Putting vocals over such frantic music proved to be somewhat of a challenge for Pearson. "What I've been doing vocally for a while, working on the Planet B stuff, is almost structurally hip-hop, with a 16-bar verse, and then you have a chorus," he explains. "[But] with stuff like Deaf Club, I look at it, and I'm like, 'Where the fuck is the chorus?' Because it is sort of just like a bunch of absurd parts kind of placed in this linear chunk of music. It's weird to find vocal placement."

As a result, Deaf Club's songs are unpredictable, abrasive and over long before the listener has had a chance to make sense of them. As a whole, the EP reflects a sense of social anxiety. For Pearson, however, having a physical copy is the best way to experience it. That's why he released *Contemporary Sickness* on vinyl through Three One G. "I think the whole thing needs to be one thing," he says. "The five songs need to be five songs in a specific order, heard in a certain way and looked at in a certain way. And you can't understand the lyrics because I'm yelling them, so the lyrics should be there [in front of you]. I think these are things that tie in. You want to look at it and get a vibe. If you just play the song on your computer, you don't know the lyrics, [and] you can't see the art—there's no vibe beyond just what the audio is. But there is a vibe that's important. You can hear the song and be like, 'These are a bunch of fucking jackasses, for all I know,' so there's got to be more to it. You've got to see the vibe and feel it. This is an all-encompassing, all-senses-involved kind of aspect."

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JAMES SAKENT

Punk Gumbo

Hi Guppy! is an OC supergroup

BY STEVE DONOFRIO

One of the best things about a thriving music scene is the collaborative spirit it encourages. The possibilities seem to be endless. And Hi Guppy! is a perfect example of how this cross-contamination can work.

After Samson Mankinen moved to Huntington Beach in 2017, he soon started playing drums in several bands. His girlfriend, Jacqueline Proctor, had just left her previous group and wanted to start transforming some of her previously written poems into songs. "So we kind of just messed around with some song ideas for a few months, and toward the end of 2017, we solidified a lineup with her cousin and her cousin's friend," Mankinen explains. "We played some shows and put out a demo. Then we had an extended period of time where we didn't really have anybody to play with. Within the last year-ish, we resolidified our lineup with Koch and Mason [Ventura] from Joynoise, and our friend Lissie [Valenzuela] has been singing with us every other show, basically, since we started."

Just two years later, Hi Guppy! have released their first official (self-titled) EP. Ventura had taken a break from the band while they were recording the songs at Volcom Studio in Costa Mesa earlier this year, so Julie Manoukian filled in and tracked the bass for the sessions. This revolving door of musicians isn't necessarily practical, but it certainly keeps things interesting.

The EP is driven by Proctor's singing and songwriting. While the songs certainly have a fair amount of grit, distortion and attitude, they also bear some intimacy and depth. "A lot of our songs are directly from Jackie's experiences," Mankinen explains. "She likes to write about her anxieties and her stresses and [from] the perspective of when she was a kid. 'Goldie Lox' is from the perspective of a little girl looking at herself and being eventually proud of who she becomes."

Of course, the band also embrace their snotty punk edge, as can be particularly heard on the tongue-in-cheek "Free Melania."

"HBPD" is a punk song with a poppy, sing-song delivery. As Proctor chants, "Ew, ew. No. 2 on you" over droning electric guitars, she sounds both adorable and sinister.

While they definitely fit in with OC's garage-rock scene, it's not hard to imagine them playing at a lighter pop show or even a full-on punk show. "It's really strange because we all come from different musical styles," Mankinen says. "But—I don't know—we're kind of just a rock band. Our singer, Jackie, and I love Foo Fighters, so we have some weird elements of that in there, but there's also a garage-y sound that Koch brings in with his guitar tones."

Mankinen also currently drums with the Side Eyes and Melted, two well-established OC bands that undoubtedly keep him busy most nights. Proctor is the drummer for the Aquadolls, who recently returned from a national tour. And Koch and Ventura have been playing extensively with Joynoise. Thanks to these other commitments, Hi Guppy! haven't been too active for the past year, but Mankinen hopes the new EP will change that.

"I want to try and hit 2020 and play way more than we did this year," he says. "Hopefully, this EP will let people know that we have a decent sound and that they can add us to lots of different types of shows.

"I don't really foresee a bunch of touring for us. That'd be rad, but we're so heavily involved in our own stuff that I think that's kind of like the last leg that we would try to pull with this band. But I just really want to play music and write and record more and see if that takes us anywhere."

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DEF FRAZIN

Friday

THE ADICTS 8 p.m. $25, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim. (714) 520-2234. houseofblues.com

DAY OF THE OEAD FEST, WITH SIMBALA, BETTY'S MUSTACHE, GLIFOS, SIN COLOR, ASHLEY IRAE, SOULTRYDUBS 7 p.m. $10, all ages. Gardee Amp, 12762 Mare St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544. gardeeamp.com

D.I. RESIOENCY NIGHT 1, FEATURING MALDITAS OROGAS, SPLNTR, BAD ANTICS 8 p.m., $10. 21+. The Doll Hut, 107 S. Adams St., Anaheim. (562) 277-0075. www.worldfamousdollhut.com.

FUNTCASE 8 p.m. $30. 18+. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; observatoryoc.com.

HIREO GUN TRIO, RHYTHM TRAIN 8 p.m., free. 21+. Gallagher's Pub, 300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. 113, Huntington Beach, (714) 951-8229; gallagherspubhb.com.

LOCAL DEADBEAT & CA EMO PRESENT NOVEMRER FOUNDATION RENEFIT 8 p.m. $7, all ages. Programme Skate & Snend, 2495 E. Chapman Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-7565. www.facebook.com/programmehq

MAT REREKES, MOTHERFOLK, TEAMONADE. 8 p.m., $15, all ages. Cham Reaction, 1952 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim. (714) 535-6967. allages.com

NICE AS HECR COLLECTION RELEASE PARTY, FEATURING NOMO; ASHES TO AMRER; RLU OREAM 8 p.m. $7-$10. 21+. Tiki Bar, 1700 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa. (949) 270-6262, tikibarcc.com.

OINGO BOINGO FORMER MEMBERS; GROOVE KITTY 8 p.m., $40, all ages. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano. (949) 496-8930. thecoachhouse.com

SEEFEEL, CHASMS, SWEGUNO 8 p.m. $25-$30, all ages. Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana. (714) 957-0600. observatoryoc.com.

SINEAD HARNETT 8:30 p.m., $22.50-$40, all ages. Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana. (714) 542-8080. theyosttheater.com.

VINYL WILLIAMS, HIGHLANOS 8 p.m., $7. 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim Blvd., Long Beach. (562) 434-8252, alexsbar.com.

Saturday

BRAHMS' THIRO RACRET, 11GRAMS, VIO 8 p.m. $7. 21+. Tiki Bar. tikibarcc.com

DAYOREAM WE RLESS THIS MESS, SLOWTRIP; SMALL PLANETS 7 p.m., $7, all ages. Programme Skate & Snend. www.facebook.com/programmehq

FAMAN GRAVE PRESENTS ARAHEIM AFTER OAKK, FEATURING CROSSFADEO, THE PEABRAINS, MALDITAS OROGAS, OANTE HH, PATIENT ZERO, THE OERANGEO; HURT RAWRS 8 p.m., $5. 21+. The Doll Hut; www.worldfamousdollhut.com.

HALLOWEEN HEADRANGERS RALE 5 p.m., $10, all ages. Garden Amp. gardeeamp.com.

KERO KERO BONITO, COWGIRL CLUE 8 p.m., $20. all ages. The Observatory. observatoryoc.com.

LOVE REVISITEO, FEATURING JOHNNY ECHOLS, THE BASH DOGS, EL PERRO, PARACOSMIC 8:45 p.m. $15. 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa. (714) 764-0828. wayfarercm.com.

MARILYN MANSON 8 p.m. $70. all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk. houseofblues.com.

NO MOTIV, MOOERN COLOR, SLOWTRIP; OMEGA POINT 7:30 p.m. $10. all ages. Cham Reactine. allages.com

TYRONE WELLS, OAN ROORIGUEZ, RIVVRS 8 p.m., $20, all ages. The Coach House. thecoachhouse.com.

VERNON MAYTONE, THE CAPSOULS 8 p.m., $22, 21+. Alex's Bar. alexsbar.com.

Sunday

ALRIGHT SPIDER, NEUTRON FRIENDS, HEPA TITUS, THE PATIENTS 8 p.m., $8, 21+. The Doll Hat; www.worldfamousdollhut.com.

DEATH VALLEY GIRLS, CROCODILES, RATE CLOVER. 8 p.m., $15, all ages. Constellation Room, observatoryoc.com.

MICHAEL TOMLINSON 7 p.m. $27.50, all ages. The Coach House. thecoachhouse.com.

UGLY BEACH 006, FEATURING RED BAG, SSWIII, VIATIC; BRY.ZEN. 4 p.m. free, 21+. The Continental Room, 115 W. Santa Fe Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-4529. www.facebook.com/continentalroom.

Monday

WHITNEY; LALA LALA. 8 p.m. $25 $55. all ages. Yost Theater. theyosttheater.com

Tuesday

BLACR STONE CHERRY 8 p.m., $20. all ages. House of Blues at Anahe m GardenWalk, houseofblees.com.

DRUG HUNT, NEW AMERICAN, COWBOY SOCIAL. 10 p.m., free. 21+. The Caetinental Room. www.facebook.com/contieentalroom

SUN SEERER, OUNCAN FELLOWS, SIXTEEN JACKIES: 8 p.m. $12, all ages. Constellation Room. observatory.com

Wednesday

RUNOY; NORTH RY NORTH, RM8, THE OEAOENDS 8 p.m., free. 21+. Alex's Bar. alexsbar.com.

ROMESAFE, RAYAK JONES, YOUNG CULTURE; REEP FLYING, CALMIGROVE, HIGHLAND; SAFETY PINS 6:30 p.m. $12, all ages. Cham Reactine. allages.com

IN FLAMES 7:30 p.m. $30-$99. all ages. The Observatory. observatoryoc.com

MICKY AND THE MOTORCAKS 8 p.m., $13, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk. houseofblees.com

WEAPONS OF MASS CREATION; WELFARE. 8 p.m. $5. 21+. The Continental Room. www.facebook.com/contieentalroom

ZAC CLARK; MOONLIGHT GRAHAM. 8 p.m., $12, 21+. The Wayfarer. wayfarercm.com

Thursday, Nov. 7

BROTHER ALI, EVIOENCE 8 p.m. $20. all ages. The Observatory. observatoryoc.com

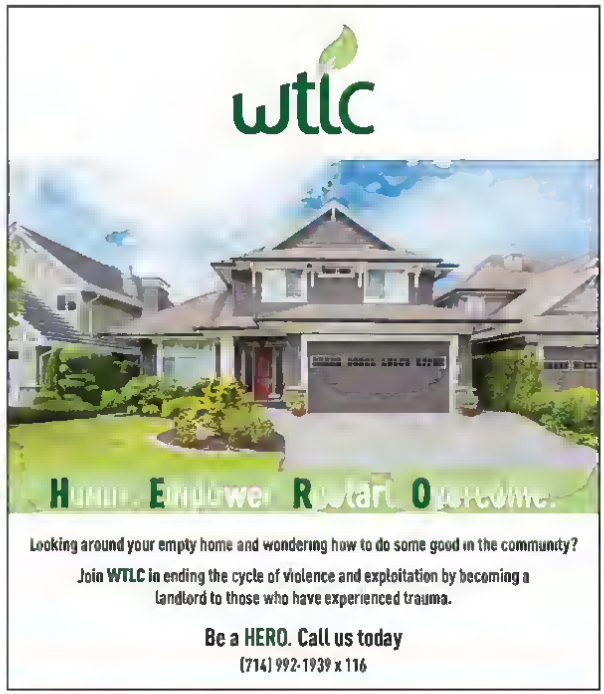
LYRICS BORN, APOLLO BEBOP 8 p.m., $18. 21+. The Wayfarer. wayfarercm.com.

MOLLY RATCHET 8 p.m. $29.50. all ages. The Coach House. thecoachhouse.com

SLAUGHTERHOUSERS, ZOMRILLYZ, APATHY CYCLE, CARBONWIRE 8 p.m. $5. 21+. The Doll Hat; www.worldfamousdollhut.com.

THE STORY SO FAR; THE FRIGHTS, HUNNY, JUST FRIENDS 7 p.m., $28.50, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk. houseofblues.com.

THE WRITHERS; THE AUTOPSIES, DRAG & THE SWAMP RATS 7:30 p.m., $6, all ages. Programme Skate & Snend; www.facebook.com/programmehq.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Quickies

My little dick has always held me back. I didn't date in high school because I couldn't stand the thought of girls discussing my tiny manhood. That said, I have adapted fairly well and become skilled with my tongue and hands. The biggest problem is that my dick is just small enough that the head pokes straight forward and can be seen through my pants. I never tuck in a shirt because of it. Because I am always in oversize shirts that hang past my waist, I never look professional. I've tried stuffing with socks, and it didn't work. Do you know of anything that can mask a pathetic johnson? I'd love to move up in the world

Physically Embarrassing Nub Isn't Sufficient

Have you considered packing? Trans men, drag kings, butch dykes, even straight cis women experimenting with gender expression will sometimes pack—that is, wear "packing dildos" that create the appearance of a masculine bulge. Packers are modeled on soft cocks, not hard cocks, and they come in a range of sizes and colors. And so long as you make it clear to new partners that the bulge in your pants is not a prologue, there's no reason why you couldn't pack just as there's no reason why you and other guys with small dicks can't strap on a regular dildo when your partner wants a deep dicking.

I'm a mid-20s straight woman, and there's a pattern in my life that I'm trying to break. Since high school, I've repeatedly ended up being friends with wonderful men with whom I shared an obvious sexual tension at the start of our "friendships." Not a single one has ever turned into more than a one-off drunken kiss. Maybe it's who I'm picking, but I'm starting to think I'm the problem. An ex of mine (whom I met on Bumble) told me that I give off "don't touch me" vibes. Looking back, I can see that all my relationships started in settings where romantic interest was implied—apps, blind dates, etc. I've been spending a lot of time with a classmate of mine, we get along well, and he's hot and single. How do I (for lack of a better term) seduce him?

Dreading The Friend Zone

Don't seduce; ask. Don't put the moves on someone, use your words—or think of your words as your move. DTFZ. Since you give off "don't touch me" vibes (that's some valuable feedback from an ex!), and since we've asked men to do a better job of perceiving and respecting a woman's "don't touch me" vibes, you will have to make your interest clear and unambiguous: "Hey, classmate, we've been spending a lot of time together, and I was wondering if you might be interested in going on a date sometime."

I have had a very hot, sexy bodybuilder friend with benefits for many, many years. He's Dominant and into really intense bondage and SM, and it's fantastic. The harder he goes on me, the more aroused he gets. Sometimes, he comes three times in one session, always with me in superintense and painful bondage positions. It turns him on so much—and it turns me on, too. The thing is, he won't touch my dick and won't let me touch it, either.

Bodybuilder Is Neglecting Dick

Ignoring your dick and not letting you come, then seeing you crawl back for more abuse is most likely part of the power trip that turns your hot, sexy friend on, BIND, and he's unlikely to start lavishing attention on your dick on my orders. And since it sounds like he gives you plenty of hot JD material for after your bondage sessions, it's not like there isn't something in it for you, right?

SavageLove

» DAN SAVAGE

I am a public-school teacher in the United States. I love teaching, and I am very good at it, but unfortunately, that doesn't affect my pay in the slightest. After 10 years of poverty, I thought perhaps I could do some sex work on the side to help pay off my student loans and get some more money for classroom supplies. Thanks to de facto segregation, all of my students are one specific ethnicity and very poor, so I think I could easily avoid accidentally servicing a parent or relative of a student. But how on earth does someone safely and discreetly embark on sex work as a side hustle?

Need a Second Job That Actually Pays

Someone you work with, someone you went to school with, someone you used to date, someone who lives in your apartment building—it's not just parents and relatives of your students you need to worry about, NASJTAP. Vindictive exes and small-minded, sex-negative busybodies of all stripes can be a problem for sex workers. And since the consequences of being outed as a sex worker are always swift and severe for someone who works with children, you'll want to find another side hustle. You should also get out there and support Democratic presidential candidates who are calling to forgive or cancel student loan debt, such as Elizabeth Warren and/or Bernie Sanders. And yes, it's possible to support more than one candidate at this stage of the political process.

My girlfriend and I have been going strong for almost 10 months. She told me that in the past she dated only older men. I am interested in your take on why she is dating me. I'm a couple of years younger than she is, and she says she sees a future with me. Can what someone likes change in this way?

The Younger Man

You may be the exception—the rare younger man your girlfriend finds attractive—or it could be that she was never attracted exclusively to older men. Just because someone dated a string of one type of person, it doesn't follow that someone isn't interested in other types, too. Someone realizing they're attracted to more types of people or acting on long-standing attractions to other types of people doesn't mean they've changed, TYM, it means they've grown.

I'm a 21-year-old woman. Yesterday, I talked to a 26-year-old guy who won't do cunnilingus but loves to get blowjobs. My friends judged him harshly. Does this go against the rule that people should be able to do what makes them feel good in bed without being judged? Guys who refuse to give oral sex but want to receive it make us feel as if our pleasure is not as important as theirs. Please tell me what you think.

Desperate Clitoris

I think there are enough women out there who don't like having their pussies eaten that there's no reason for this guy to inflict himself on women who *do* like having their pussies eaten. And if making your partner feel good doesn't make you feel good—if giving pleasure as well as receiving pleasure doesn't make you feel good—then you're a lousy fucking fay. All that said, I agree that people should be able to do what makes them feel good in bed without being judged. But if what you're doing in bed—or refusing to do in bed—makes other people feel bad about themselves or their bodies, well, then you should be judged harshly.

On the Lovecast *(savagelovecast.com), Dan enlists straight-boy help from Michael Ian Black. Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.*

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Founded in 2018 with the purpose of bringing cannabis to lifestyle-focused individuals, goodbrands offers a lineup of skillfully cultivated flowers and prerolls that's already taking the industry by storm. And at the Hall of Flowers in September, the Canadescent-owned line recently leveled up with a new edible offering, goodmints.

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Whether it's to provide relief after a long day or to get motivated before that big meeting, goodbrands goodmints should be a staple in your purse, bag or desk drawer. I've been using the mints for about a week, and I can assure you of two things: My breath has never been fresher, and my workplace has been none the wiser. (Just make sure you're careful who you open the tin around, or you'll be explaining to Karen in HR that you didn't mean to micro dose half the office.)

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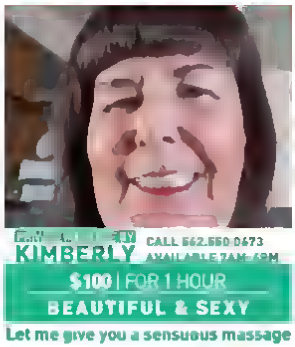
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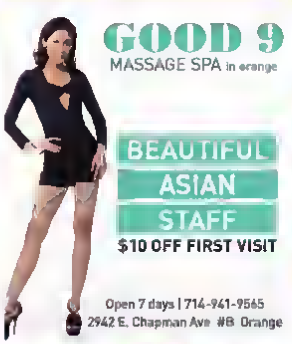
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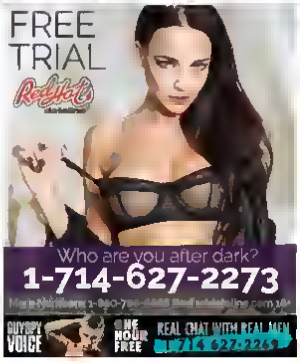
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Towering Tree vs. CRISPr Creature

Experimental Engagements conference brings the Society for Literature, Science and the Arts to UCI

BY LISA BLACK

A compulsion to venture beyond the realms in which members usually operate is the impulse behind the Society for Literature, Science and the Arts (SLSA). The group's innovation-focused academics and independent scholars, researchers, and artists will hold their 33rd-annual meeting at UC Irvine, where their interdisciplinary inquiries will unfold in multitudinous panels and presentations under the theme of Experimental Engagements.

Co-organizing the event are UCI art professors Antoinette LaFarge and Jesse Colin Jackson, who have devised an exhibition that in itself differs from the usual group art show. Their curating for "At the Margins" was driven in part by the limited space of a photographic gallery in the student center, as well as by a desire to collect creative content from those who don't ordinarily identify as artists. Their call was aimed at all contingents of the society's membership, asking for a single image in response to the prompt "What is the location of your Experimental Engagement?"

Submissions had to include a square jpeg image, a caption, a quote and a citation (in Chicago footnote style), all in portrait orientation. About 50 of these poster-shaped snapshots will be on view and open to the public. With apologies to Jackson for using the word *poster*—"as it signals something nobody wants," he quipped—I've previewed a riveting sample of these *non*posters. The images and words capture worlds colliding, where biochemists cite poets and artists quote neuroscientists, from a neuron forest to a future in which we have nostalgia for the sun.

Places depicted veer from Rebecca Cummin's "deep space of a human cell" to an elegant photo of Gowanus Canal, "beloved neighborhood, EPA Superfund site," as captured in Heather Parrish's *Atopia*, to a glitch "created by capturing horizontal 'slices' of still frames at one-second intervals from Stanley's Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)" in *Star . . . gate()* by Eddie Lohmeyer.

Zeroing in on a locale was a challenge even for LaFarge, whose medium is computers and cyberspace. "I thought about what it might mean to say that these form the location of my engagements. . . . In the end, I decided that for my work, 'location' is more metaphysical than physical."

It's quite corporeal for *The Compost Pile*, a lush closeup of decay, for which Aja Rose Bond cites herself: "To compost, I propose, is to enter a liminal space between the living, dead, the non-living and the non-human—here framed as the domain of the witch." Registered conference-goers can join Bond in a "compost devotional ritual."

Yulia Gilich's *Settler Innocence* corrals the events of May 14, 2018, in a chilling collage

IMAGES COURTESY OF UCI/SLSA19

of barbed wire, an exultant singer, fleeing Palestinians and selfie-taking non-elected members of the Trump family with Benjamin Netanyahu. That day, Tel Aviv celebrated Israel's victory in the Eurovision Song Contest, the U.S. moved its embassy to Jerusalem, and 60 Palestinians were killed and 2,700 injured. Gilich quotes Gloria Wekker from her book *White Innocence*: "The claim of innocence, however, is a double-edged sword: it contains not-knowing, but also not wanting to know."

RedPenBlackPen scientific-comics artist and computational biologist Jason McDermott's *Map of Manuscript Earth* represents the journey of completing a scientific paper: "I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by."

Maria Michails' *Cross-Border Interludes* depicts a Venn diagram of aerial views of the rural and urban environments impacted by oil extraction where she has generated community art projects. On the complexities of switching to sustainable energy, Michails quotes the Petrocultures Research Group: "We will not make an adequate or democratic transition to a world after oil without first changing how we think, imagine, see, and hear."

SLSA 2019 is three days of people committed to doing just that.

Plus, in the evenings when the unregistered can partake, food trucks and celebratory receptions will precede gallery viewing at the School of the Arts. Performances include a free concert and talk-back by Teeth & Metals, whose experimental piano and electronics are sure to shake the snowglobe of your brain.

And two inter-media spectacles take the stage: *AirLock*, by playwright/academic/artistic director of Padua Playwrights Guy Zimmerman and directed by Scarlett Kim, is a "high-tech, high-stakes game of cosmic sabotage," in which spacewalkers are trapped outside space stations and the airlock that nestles our planet. *Reading Frankenstein*, a collaboration by three UCI professors (Anne Lou in drama, Jim Fallon in medicine, and LaFarge), debuted in 2003, but it no longer contains cutting-edge technology for its central figure, scientist Mary Shelley. The update shifts to genetic engineering in place of AI.

Meaning both *artificial intelligence* and *ignorance*, AI is all over the conference schedule, as is the unfamiliar CRISPr (clustered regularly interspaced short palindrome repeats). Grasping onto *palindromes* was of no help in comprehending its implications for *Reading Frankenstein*. "CRISPr is essentially a toolkit that makes editing genes both faster and more precise," explains LaFarge. "For our piece, we thought about it as a way to greatly speed up evolution and bring into being life forms of kinds that had never yet appeared on Earth—for better or for worse. And CRISPr has appeared at precisely the moment in history that climate change is exerting enormous pressure on life all over Earth—pushing many species that can't evolve rapidly enough toward extinction."

All these creative enterprises around life's ubiquitous reminders of doom have me alternating between states of exultation and depression. So I'll leap into the experimental labs of Icahn School of Medicine neuroscientist Allison Waters and theater artist/organic farmer Tannis Kowalchuk. Their lecture/performance *Out of Mind* begins with Waters relating the lab results measuring the actress' brain in various mood-states as part of her research in developing neurotechnologies to treat depression. But Kowalchuk interrupts on accordion. The explosion of the standard lecture by song, physical action and Shakespeare unleashes the process of discovery and reveals an unconventional relationship between researcher and subject.

While *Out of Mind* is for registered members of SLSA, I include it not only because these discoverers are longtime friends, but also because their collaboration has evolved over the 21st century; it started with creating original theater, then branched out toward science independently, and recommenced in an inspiring hybrid.

As our world careens toward despotism and demise, it's comforting to know connections are fortifying across social, scientific and artistic spheres just as the roots of 3,000-year-old coastal redwoods do just below the surface of the ground.

It's towering tree vs. CRISPr creature in a Big Boss Battle—that's Paint It Black's Experimental Engagement.

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"AT THE MARGINS"
at Viewpoint Gallery, UCI Student Center, 311 W Peltason Dr , Irvine. Nov 8-16, 7 a.m -midnight.
Experimental Engagements/SLSA19
at UCI Student Center and at Claire Trevor School of the Arts, 4002 Mesa Rd., Irvine, hscarts org/slsa19/special-events/ Nov 7-9. See website for special events open to the public.

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DAPPER DAY EXPO
NOV 2+3
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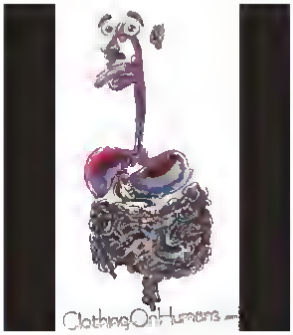

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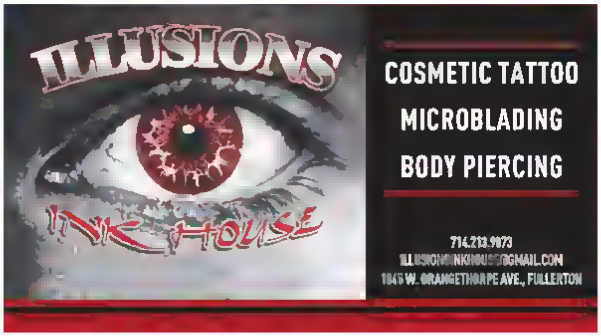

CONCERTS AT NEWPORT DUNES

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS
Ft. The Como La Flor Bond
A Tribute to Seleno
Saturday, Nov 2
Bayside Tent Canopy

LIKE ZEPPELIN
Saturday, Nov 2
Back Bay Bistro

SIBARG ENSEMBLE & THE MARROW
Sunday, Nov 3
Back Bay Bistro

JUSTIN ABRAMS & BEYOND CONCEPTION
w/ Steve Moggiora & Jackie Pember
Friday, Nov 8
Back Bay Bistro

JOURNEY CAPTURED
A Tribute to Journey
Saturday, Nov 16
Back Bay Bistro

TIJUANA DOGS
Saturday, Nov 30
Bayside Tent Canopy

QUEEN NATION
Friday, Dec 6
Bayside Tent Canopy

STEVIE NICKS ILLUSION-NYE
A Tribute to Stevie Nicks and Fleetwood Mac
Tuesday, Dec 31
Back Bay Bistro

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